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THE THREE CONVENTIONS

METAPHYSICAL DIALOGUES, PRINCIPIA
METAPHYSICA, AND COMMENTARY

BY
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PREFACE

So long as we conceive the world to be only in the process of Becoming, so long will it be inevitable that all our world-conceptions be in constant flux. A world that never is but always to be cannot remain stable enough for a single moment to allow even of description, let alone of definition and interpretation; and a statement approximately true today may be anything but true tomorrow. Metaphysics and Philosophy, in these circumstances, are not so much as even guesses at truth, since the truth about a process of Becoming, if it be no more than that, can only be known when the process is complete, that is to say, when all life has ceased. They are, at best, a kind of meteorological prediction, but in a field vastly more complex than that of weather and, in consequence, at a vastly greater disadvantage than common meteorology. If, as is too generally assumed by modern science, what we call life is only Becoming, there is small wonder that Metaphysics and Philosophy proper should be regarded as fancies unworthy of serious attention.

On the other hand, if we accept the classical view that the process of Becoming is not the Becoming of Reality, but only of our perception of Reality; in

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other words, that Reality always is, and that our appreciation of it is alone a process,—many things, now necessarily unintelligible and meaningless, become at least potentially intelligible. Knowledge, in short, becomes possible on the assumption that there is something to know, not merely in a remote future when Reality has become, but here and now. If Reality is the ground-pattern of Becoming, then we have not to wait for the consummation of all things to discover it. In any given phase of Becoming the pattern Reality is exemplified; and a superior perception today or, in fact, at any moment in history, could divine the pattern ages in advance of the general perception of mankind.

The consequences of such a discovery of the ground-pattern of Reality are obvious. Things could be given their proper place in relation to the whole; and truth would be comparable to mathematics. Behind the phenomena of Becoming would be perceptible the noumena of Being, truth behind fact, ideas behind life. And in relation to the complete pattern the various categories of experience and experiment could be placed with theoretically mathematical precision and certainty.

That this is by far the most important object of thought is evident from two considerations. Science today may be said to be advancing in all directions and therefore in none, for want of precisely the true conception of the whole which a competent Metaphysic or Philosophy can alone provide. And it is

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doomed to wander and be lost in the endless labyrinths of Becoming unless some Ariadne, with the plan of the maze before her, presents science with the guiding thread.

In practical life, no less than in science, the need of a true view of the whole is perhaps the greatest need of our day. Psycho-analysis has revealed the fact that our characteristic, emotional attitude towards life is determined by our conception of life. Such as we conceive life to be we feel it to be; and as we feel it to be we act and move and manifest our being. To quote an Indian writer, if I conceive a coiled rope lying on my path to be a snake, I shall feel and act accordingly. And in the infinitely wider field of human existence if we, as men, mistake life for what it is not, conceive it as an unknowable Becoming in place of a Reality knowable in Becoming, the attitude evoked by the image will impel us to acts of correspondent error. Life being one thing, our false imagination of it becomes the parent of everything false. The specifically pathological cases of the psychoanalysts are only the extreme forms of an almost universal pathology.

I know of nothing in literature, outside of certain Sanskrit text-books impossible of intelligible translation, to equal in precision and concise comprehensiveness the present essay by Professor Saurat. Ten years ago his contributions to the "New Age" acquainted English readers with the fact that a notable thinker, with an astonishing grasp of English,

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had appeared in France; and as, one by one, his various studies appeared, it was evident that Professor Saurat's process of Becoming was the phenomenon of a Reality which sooner or later would demand expression in a Metaphysic. And the present work is the evidence.

A. R. ORAGE

NOTE

These are not discussions between antagonistic minds, but rather impressions of three Intelligences, simultaneously watching the infinite procession of facts and ideas. Philosophy studies the realm of the possible, is a search for the probabilities that may explain experience. It is therefore essential for the thinker to mark as precisely as he can what degree of affirmation he attaches to each idea. Continual dogmatism deceives both the reader and the writer, for it misrepresents thought, whose creations are mostly hypotheses. Rather than three characters, the psychologist, the metaphysician and the poet are three degrees of probability. The psychologist states facts, the metaphysician hypotheses, the poet mere possibilities. Every man has in himself those three Intelligences. According to the freedom and power of his imagination, he gives more or less credit to one or other of them. But those that do not command his trust often nevertheless lead him, and, in any case, play in his life their harmonious part.

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ONTOLOGY

THE ACTUAL AND THE INACTUAL

He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the Universe.

SHELLEY (Prom. Unbound).

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The first condition of the existence of thought is to be incomplete.

From any object several ideas come together to the mind; feelings immediately mingle with them; and, simultaneously, numerous possibilities of action crowd into the soul. But, although we can at the same moment have many thoughts in our consciousness, we can put only one into words. We can think with precision of only one at a time.

Thus, in any sentence shaped in our minds, each word stands for an infinite series of facts, which it is impossible for us to picture completely in detail.

This succession of abstractions is made possible only through language. If we had to proceed by direct vision, we should have to imagine exactly first one particular fact, in given circumstances, with all its manifold aspects, which even the plastic arts hardly succeed in doing.

And for each step in the progress of the sentence

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we should have to add one more series of mind-pictures and, our imagination failing to retain them all, thought would be lost in the chaos of facts.

But we give a name to first one group of abstractions, then another. This stands as a clear mark, so we are no longer obliged to imagine, for a fact, the infinite series of its aspects.

But we have named incomplete series—mere possibilities of unrealised images: that alone enables us to stop somewhere; that alone enables us to think.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Language has created thought, abstracting it from feeling, sensation and desire.

There are, therefore, in each thought, two parts:

What is expressed we shall call the Actual;

What remains unexpressed, the Inactual.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Words drive thought out of the mind: It is impossible to think while one speaks. That is the absorbing power of the Actual: the condition of its creative power: it drives from its presence all that is not itself.

The first intuition of anything comprehends the Inactual; language expresses only the Actual, and drives down intuition.

But language is always preceded by intuition. Thought is not, first and immediately, language, although it is only perceived as language.

If we meditate upon a problem, sometimes, all at once, there is a sudden illumination: we have found the solution; then, instantaneously, it disappears.

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For one second we have been satisfied, the next we are disappointed: not in the solution, but because the solution, clearly revealed for one instant, has disappeared before being expressed, and thus is lost. There remains with us the impression that we were in possession of the solution for a moment.

Now language is a recent thing in us, as compared with matter. Our material visions of our intuitions, our external perceptions, are therefore much more rapid than our translation of them into language. And yet hesitation seems to exist in matter also: we have seen something, and then again we have not.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: What, then, is intuition? A modification of our desires, of our Inactual?

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Language is an obstacle to the simultaneity of facts in our consciousness. It expresses only one fact at a time. And that one, in sole possession of consciousness, becomes, at that moment, stronger than the others.

That which is expressed is truer than before.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Expression influences reality, forces and changes it; that is the power of the Actual.

A form, once created, creates its matter. Vague and indeterminate being, which is the stuff of the world, comes and moulds itself in all created forms.

Ideas once expressed become true: little by little reality agglomerates round them.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Sometimes.

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THE METAPHYSICIAN: Thus thought has created being.

Language has created thought, by differentiating it from feeling.

THE POET: Thought has created man, by differentiating him from other beings.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: An unexpected question is put to us, about something we have known or seen. We begin our answer without knowing what we are going to say. For some sentences we proceed, in the dark, not knowing what we shall say next.

Then, all at once, the idea comes, and the clear answer.

For instance, in extempore speaking, a train of commonplace ideas awakens others in us, and sometimes original ones.

And yet one cannot think clearly while speaking; while we are saying something our words absorb our thought. But beneath this state, of which we are conscious, we feel our minds moving about, searching in all directions, and all at once, without any possibility of reflection, the idea appears.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The Actual has appealed to the Inactual. Form creates: words in motion have called upon ideas, which come. But the ideas must have been in the mind already or are such as the mind would have created, had it been able to reflect consciously.

THE METAPHYSICIAN (again): Reality is formed by a collaboration: by a convention.

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That which many accept is true: it has a power in the world, even over those who do not accept it. And there is no other kind of truth.

Hence the function of the masses: they render true the ideas which men of genius conceive.

Truth is thus in a process of construction.

All beings, drawn from the same origin by similar desires, address themselves together to similar enterprises, and help one another in their expression of themselves.

THE POET: Even non-human beings have a share in that collaboration: the earth, the stars, the plants, the elements, and so on.

THE POET (again): An idea has power, even though it be not true, through the very fact of its being conceived. For it may be subtle, high and precious without being true or even intense: then its sole presence will change universal opinion, which, sooner or later, will admit it into reality.

Hence the usefulness of arguments and researches in the realm of the possible and even of the false: they may end in conquests for the human mind.

Truth is the morality of ideas. The man of whom the majority approves is moral, the idea of which man approves is true.

But there are worthless beings, at all stages of existence: they remain, accepted and despised.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: In the course of its own development a being is ever faced by the Inactual it is perpetually rejecting. It feels, all round its

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narrow circle, the disquieting presence of all it has not expressed, has not drawn into consciousness. It cannot therefore shape itself purely logically, as its need of simplicity and clearness would have it do.

But when a being tries to figure the universe outside itself its need of logic and clearness is free; it pictures other beings with fast and precise lines.

Hence arises the fundamental error, spring of all others, which is to mistake the form for the whole, the expression for the being.

THE POET: This is the problem of the completion of the Actual. The non-expressed, ever present, influences the expressed.

Will a state of equilibrium be reached?

Will the Actual master the Inactual?

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The first condition of thought is to be incomplete. Therefore, as thought becomes more and more precise, it leaves outside itself more and more of the Inactual.

Thinking develops problems, and does not solve them.

A being trying to understand itself develops into a subject and an object: it demands in itself an observer that is watching it. The very conception of this second person, this observer, makes an object of it, which necessitates a third witness in the mind. The subject, trying to grasp its own existence, multiplies, and escapes its own grasp.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Every existence is infinite: therefore, all law is impossible.

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The Actual intensifies the Inactual by casting out of itself unexpressed possibilities, which their very rejection exasperates.

The Inactual, ever greater and ever more intense, is an infinite source of actuality, as it is ever tending towards expression. The non-expressed seeks to express itself; but all expression adds to the mass of the non-expressed all it rejects, and thus increases it.

In this way the Actual and the Inactual grow together, perpetually the one out of the other.

THE METAPHYSICIAN (again): And thus all perfection is impossible. Thus, also, there is absolute identity between perfect being and non-being. The idea of omnipotence is self-contradictory.

One can only act upon what offers resistance.

To the Omnipotent, nothing can offer resistance, he can act upon nothing. Perfect thought understands itself entirely; all diversity in it is absorbed into unique and perfectly monotonous light.

Perfect being has nothing to think of: there is no problem left for it: it therefore no longer thinks. Nor does it desire any longer, having nothing left to desire. Why should perfection change? Why should the infinite become finite? That which is satisfied ceases from being, that which comes into perfection falls into nothingness. Absolute existence annihilates itself.

THE POET: A progress towards perfection is a progress towards annihilation.

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THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The aim of all desire is to become conscious of itself, with a consciousness as clear and as intense as possible.

In order to know itself, all desire has to concentrate itself: it can intensify its own consciousness only on one point at a time.

In order to know itself, desire has to limit itself: to cast out of itself a number of its possibilities—and any rejected possibility is an open spring of new existences.

Thus desire, expressing itself, subdivides itself. All being divides itself in its expression.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: This, then, is the way in which desire divides itself into beings:

The impossibility for Total Being to conceive itself as a whole is the spring of separate existences, for, if it could so conceive itself, being would be one only. But its first expression being necessarily incomplete, in its unexpressed parts other beings form themselves, separate from the first.

Each of those first existences is a Universe.

In each Universe, thus created, numerous beings in their turn are formed, each crystallizing one tendency of the parent being, each rejecting a new Inactual.

Each of those beings in its turn is subdivided in an infinite process. Thus being is divided and subdivided, becoming more and more diverse, intense and limited. Thus into a world come men, and into a man come ideas.

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FEELING—CONCENTRATION—CREATION

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Pain springs from intensity. It is the feeling of the separation of the Actual from the Inactual, when desire tears and casts out of itself part of its own being in order to limit and concentrate itself.

All creation produces suffering, since all creation is limitation and concentration.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Hence in man a fear of all intensity, of all concentration, of all progress: a fear of love in young hearts, a fear of work in all men.

But joy in love and in work runs parallel to pain and is greater, since it is made up of the intimate sense of the normal development of life, and also of asceticism, of the pleasure there is in a pain accepted and conquered.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Pleasure is the self-consciousness of desire, which is the aim of life in all its expressions, the essence of being.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: There is in love: for woman a humiliation in loving, with the pride of being loved; for man a humiliation in being loved, with the pride of loving.

To this might be compared the humiliation there is in work for man, which still continues to exist, when mastered, in the pride of great workers.

A contrast: man is humiliated in being an object of love; woman is proud of being an object of work—of inspiring work.

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THE METAPHYSICIAN: Humiliation is the consciousness of limitation in face of the world: the feeling that we are part of a whole, and that the whole—the world—in its lower stage of being, wider and less intense than we are, despises the point, narrower and more intense, which we are making.

Hence the humiliation of the specialist, the contempt the world feels for him.

Humiliation is the external sense of limitation; as suffering is the internal sense of it.

In the pride of love and work is the feeling that we lead, that we carry forward the world—with defiance of it, and the asceticism of conquered shame.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Love is for man a possibility of enlarging his being: hence his pride in loving. For woman it is a limitation: hence her shame in it.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: With her social sense woman feels shame bitterly—but her social sense is not limited to society. Woman is ashamed of her love before the universe, before things and the general being, rather than before men. She is often proud of it before men, but in her inner heart she is humiliated. Hence her need to hide love.

THE POET: Man is ashamed of inspiring love, while woman is proud of inspiring work; this shows that the sense of universal communion is more developed in her. She is proud of being an instrument of this communion: man is humiliated.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: There is a part of error in pity, as our pleasure in the presence of pain proves.

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Pity is a degradation for the pitied one. Pity shows we are not at one with the march of the universe.

Woman has the feeling of universal communion, hence her joy in suffering; in her own, in others: the pitilessness of woman.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Pity is a personal pain felt by the witness of pain; the concentration painfully carried out in one being is being carried out in the whole universe: the whole universe suffers when one being suffers.

Pity is a disguise the universe puts upon its own pain in the presence of a suffering being.

Hence the contempt of the sufferer for those who pity him. In reality, they suffer for and in themselves, and are pretending they suffer for him. But he suffers more. This explains the irritation there is in being pitied.

There is in suffering the same humiliation as in love and in work; from which springs the need of secrecy in suffering.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Jealousy and purity are forms of the instinct of concentration in love: the sense that its development must take place in one direction exclusive of all others.

Hence the need of secrecy for love: it avoids all outside participation for a spectator is a participant.

There is a hypocrisy in love which consists in loving in order to know. Woman therefore mistrusts intellect.

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THE POET: The instinct of concentration is shown in the ferocious rivalries between men who work on the same lines. Each wants to be the one channel of evolution.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Love is the consciousness that a creation is possible by union, either physical or intellectual.

Feeling springs from creation; also from the creation of feeling.

Thus, among many other feelings, the consciousness of possible creation produces love, which, for instance, produces the feeling of making the loved one happy; which, for instance, produces pride—or, occasionally, hatred.

And so on, ad infinitum. Therefore, feeling is inexhaustible.

Therefore, all being is infinite in its desires; and any individual is infinite.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: In pity there is, besides, a pleasure in the presence of suffering. And in love, there is envy of the happiness of the loved one. The ascetic pleasure of conquering that envy does much to deepen love.

There is also in love a hatred produced by the limitations, the suffering, which the loved one—and creation—bring about.

Hence the easy transformation of love into hatred.

But that hatred normally deepens love, makes it more serious; feelings which have to struggle against others strike deeper roots.

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The instinct of concentration, the need for individualization, brings about our desire that none should have what we have: jealousy.

Hence, for lovers, the shame there is in recognising in others their own feeling, especially in inferior beings: animals, despised people. Hence the need that none even of our own expressions should be a repetition, which is a vulgarisation.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Avarice is the love of an expression for its own sake, without reference to its aim: the triumph of the absorbing power of the Actual. For instance, art for art's sake, philology, science: the acceptance of language as a reality.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Morality is the sense that the concentration of the Actual is necessarily a limitation.

It consists in renouncing numerous possibilities of action, and directing life along one exclusive line. Civilized man, to become moral, has to give up many activities which are natural to the savage.

The question what way is chosen, can be answered in different manners, according to historical circumstances. Ultimately, man may come to choose the way that helps the universe.

But meanwhile there are several parallel moralities; as long as there is deliberate and consistent choice of one exclusive line of action, there is morality.

There is identity between morality and jealousy—the need of concentration.

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There is identity between the moral conscience and consciousness: the first necessity for both is to choose between different possibilities; to reject some; to concentrate on the selected ones.

There is identity between morality and creation, either physical or intellectual.

The first law of being is the law of concentration.

THE INDIVIDUAL

THE POET: At our birth and at each decision we take in life, we reject a great number of possibilities, which, however, remain in our Inactual. In response to the appeal of certain circumstances or people, some of the possibilities usually under the control of our habitual personality assert themselves in us. We then assume a different personality.

But when our usual personality returns, we find ourselves in a false position: we have to keep the promises, and bear the responsibility of the acts, of the usurping personality.

Hence the unintentional but natural occurrence of lies and unfaithfulness. Hence the fundamental unreliability of most men, who are not sufficiently masters of their own characters to keep down intruding personalities.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The possibilities thus rejected by each are infinite for each. They interpenetrate one another, and thus constitute an external common unconscious.

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The Inactual belongs to no one individual.

There is no boundary between the self and the not-self.

Our sense of an outside world is the feeling that while some of our possibilities are realised, some are not.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: There is a law of contraries, and of their attraction for each other. A being has some fundamental tendency. As he gains knowledge of himself, that tendency becomes to him commonplace, exhausted, and a hindrance to his other desires.

In consequence the highest and most conscious part of him takes their side, in as far as it can (although the fundamental tendency is still preserved).

Thus one being is compact of contraries. A tendency is a limitation from which a being often needs to escape; the opposite extreme is the most useful quality to that being; and he possesses himself of it.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The difference between one individual and another lies in the extent to which each consents to limit himself—to suffer—in order to actualise and intensify himself; the measure in which he consents to work.

The more a being limits himself, the more intense it becomes, the more of the Inactual it casts out; the more it suffers.

THE METAPHYSICIAN (again): Each being, each desire, develops on its own plane; it cannot pass up

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to another plane of being: that would be to cease from being itself.

But in its own plane, in its inexhaustible capacity for subdivision, each being has infinite development open to it: the only infinite it desires. It neither wants nor is it able to change itself; it only desires to express itself more and more, such as it is.

THE POET: Thus, after death, vile beings will continue to express their vile desires subdivided into vile ideas.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST *on Old Age*: A desire, the desire of physical pleasure, having transformed itself into diverse other desires and into ideas, falls and ceases. It was the principal desire behind the body.

Its co-desires continue, and keep up the common expression—the body. But the disappearance of their chief creates numerous obstacles to their existence. In the ensuing struggle, each one, more or less rapidly, reaches its own perfection. One by one, they fall, they sleep. They give up that mode of expression, the body, which exhausts them, perfects them, kills them.

THE POET: They sleep, to wake up again, and then, their chief, sexual desire, being no longer present, having been finally subdivided, they build for themselves a new vehicle of expression, easier, suppler, more pliable to their wants, than the body.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Thus a being dies in old age, gradually. Sexual desire is the principal desire in

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the body: life on earth is sexual life. When it disappears, in old age, the expression must change: death is coming.

THE POET: Childhood is the gradual appearance of the desires of a being: the world refuses to be hustled: it only consents to take a new being into account little by little. The introduction of a being is a struggle, gradual and regular.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: There are in us numerous secondary desires which need to be expressed. If they are not, they fill us with their rebelliousness.

From this arises the necessity for regular occupations and physical labor, for those secondary desires are chiefly expressed in the actions of the body. Their non-satisfaction causes illness.

Being hardly conscious, they are easily forgotten, with evil results. They allow us to work at our higher expressions only when they are appeased. And with their collaboration, higher desires can be better expressed.

THE POET: So in society must the masses, the sum total of the innumerable secondary desires of mankind, be occupied and satisfied.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Many of our deeper feelings hardly become conscious. They become apparent in our actions. Judged by the relation between our conscious feelings and our actions, we should be found senseless.

THE POET: Sometimes, in moments of great calm, before sleep, in dreams, we perceive the summits of

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those deeper feelings, like islands appearing in some universal low tide.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: As our ideas, subdivided from us after our death, will no longer be conscious of us, so we no longer know those cosmic feelings which carry us and make us act.

They are parts of immense beings, anterior to us, of whom we are points.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Even our willed actions correspond to deeper feelings than those which seem to inspire them. Our non-willed actions must correspond to deeper feelings still, which perhaps constitute destiny.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Which express themselves through us to become conscious.

That is the reason, though not the aim of our life.

THE METAPHYSICIAN (again): The unconscious is the presence in individuals of the universal desires. It does not concern men, but universes. It is an error to look to the unconscious part of a man for his true personality. The unconscious is not personal: it is vague; it is not so powerful as the conscious. When it is drawn into light, nothing very high or very desirable is obtained. Its power comes from its immense mass.

It is not man's aim to draw into light the great vague desires of the universes upon which we live, but only the parts of those desires we have chosen as our own, and concentrated upon. To cultivate the unconscious is going backwards. It is the cosmolog-

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ical heresy, which consists in trying to realise the world's desires, not ours; in giving ourselves up to become the universe.

Universal desires have reached in their sphere—an unconscious one for us—the intensity they are capable of. We force and warp them when we try to draw them higher, to make them into the essential parts of our beings of which they are indeed the largest and least important parts; the centre of our life is not in them.

Our languages are not made for them, and do them wrong.

The work of man is on the next higher stage: he has only to enjoy world desire, not to express it.

THE UNIVERSE, MEN AND IDEAS

THE METAPHYSICIAN: There are two forms of creation known to man: love—the creation of men and of feelings, the passing from universal masses to mankind; intelligence—the creation of thoughts, the passing from man to ideas.

In woman is accomplished the passing from the universe to mankind; hence woman is nearer to the universe than man and her feeling of universal communion is greater than man's.

What we call conception is the union of ideas (in possibility) given by man, with the universal mass, prepared by woman; the rousing, by man's appeal, of the latent possibility of ideas in the universal

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matter in woman; the realisation of those possibilities in woman.

The masculine element is the Actual.

The feminine element is the Inactual.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The aim of union in love is the realisation of the life of the participants: joy, and not creation of a new being.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Any concentration of the Actual in joy is an incitement to the Inactual to accomplish a similar concentration.

Conception comes from pleasure; in the presence of pleasure the Inactual, by its own motion, rushes into being.

THE POET: But birth, which is a separation from the universal mass, and a casting off of the Inactual, takes place in pain.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The feminine element is as necessary for the creation of ideas as it is for the creation of physical life. The mechanism of creation is the same in both cases; the appeal of an intense Actual to the vague possibilities of the Inactual, which, responding, crystallise into an expression.

Thus in each individual the two elements, masculine and feminine, are found.

Great intellectual creators have more of woman in them than other men; they can, alone, create ideas, whereas in ordinary men or women there is not enough of the other element to make them actively, completely creative: they need the contact of the other sex to create ideas; for love is normally necessary

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even to the creation of ideas. The selfishness of men of genius has much of love in it; they are in love with the feminine part of themselves.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The proper aim of human existence is the resolution of desires into ideas.

THE POET: Perhaps the aim of animal and inferior life is the resolution of the universe into human desires.

THE POET (again): The dispositions in woman that make her apt to bear children are not the consequences of her function, but the causes of it.

The creation of the sexes is explained by the law of contraries. The first effort of concentration of the general being produces the Actual, the masculine element, precise and creative. But man, by himself and in himself, is too precise; he needs his opposite to be alive. The general Inactual is too vague to answer his too precise appeal.

Hence man's need of, man's appeal for, a limited Inactual, an Inactual within his reach, which he can fecundate. The response to that appeal is woman.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Desire, when it develops, multiplying itself and becoming more precise through language, transforms itself into ideas. Feeling becomes intelligence. Sentiments become ideas.

The intellect, in its workings, starts from a very vague general idea, which is really nothing but a feeling. This feeling is developed by language. To express it, we choose its principal points. Each of those points is divided and subdivided into more

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precise parts, until the primitive feeling has been resolved into ideas.

A being's degree of intelligence depends upon the precision and certainty with which that being chooses, to express them, the essential points of its feeling.

An argument is false when it has not expressed those essential points. Then the feeling at its base remains unsatisfied.

The difference in quality between one idea and another is in their more or less complete and accurate rejection of their Inactual.

Thus intelligence is a quality of the will in desire.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST (again): For most people there is no conflict between desire and reason. Such a conflict is abnormal, and a disease.

Essential desires in a man are taken for granted by him. His intellect is at work to satisfy them. His ideas are simply a development of his desires.

His intellect is not even normally busy in justifying his desires, which need no justification, even if they are evil.

Conflict, when it comes, is between the social law and the individual desire. It is not his own reason that the criminal goes against, but generally the reason of the group he belongs to: collective intelligence.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: What we call abstract ideas are only names given to groups, nations of ideas, each idea in which is different and individual. An idea can exist in one man only. Other men may have similar ideas, related or allied to that one, but an

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idea is essentially a division of a certain man's desire, within him.

When it is expressed, it may call up in other men similar ideas, and found a sort of nation of ideas in its likeness. Then we say that the idea is shared by other men; really it is multiplied in them.

Therefore, strictly speaking, each idea is an individual; it lives in one man, and cannot live elsewhere, and no absolutely identical idea can exist anywhere. An idea is, in a man, a point of an immemorial desire common to many men, which is subdivided so as to reach consciousness in each of those men. Our language names that idea as though it were one in all its individual appearances.

But really each man who accepts and understands a general idea is only realising in his desire an individual idea related to all the ideas in other men which bear the same name. The abstract expression of an idea in our language is the attempt to give a name to one of those nations of ideas.

THE POET: General ideas, thus named, hover over the world in art. He who wishes to, receives them, lets his Inactual be fecundated by them, and conceives in himself real and individual ideas, in their likeness.

The pleasure of the creative artist is thus the masculine joy: the appeal that draws towards existence all vague possibilities, the joy of creating.

The pleasure we take in art is the feminine pleasure: the joy of being created.

COSMOLOGY

THE LANGUAGE OF MATTER

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Matter is a language. We use it to express larger and less subtle desires than are expressed in human languages; and we have it in common with many other beings.

A whole category of our desires can be expressed properly only through it.

Like human language, matter has its faults, its impossibilities, its errors. Its laws make the expression of many of our desires impossible. We can only alter it very slowly and with great difficulty, because the collaboration of the beings who use it stretches much too far for our control. Hence it is necessary for us to create our own languages, which are less universal, less real, but more supple, more delicate, and more individual.

THE POET: Just as the sounds of human language are vibrations, so matter is made up only of vibrations.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: To act is to express oneself in the language of matter, just as to speak is to express oneself in human language.

Man and most beings express themselves chiefly

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in this material language: hence its reality and importance.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: All beings collaborate, by their conduct, in the establishment of the conventions that rule over the language of matter; and they refuse to admit into that language, to understand, to take into account, all expressions that break these conventions.

THE POET: Science is the grammar of the material language. But scientists study only the forms of it, that enable us to use it, not the meanings behind. Just as the laws of our language do not entirely apply to thought, so the laws of matter do not entirely apply to being. In reality, those laws of matter have no absolute value: they are only conventions.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Activity and thought are equally expressions of will or desire, only in different languages. Just as we have the power to do or not to do some action (which is an expression in the language of matter) irrespective of its righteousness or timeliness, so we have the power to believe or not to believe in some thought irrespective of its truth.

THE POET: The work of all beings is the building of the languages which express being, by which and through which being realises itself: the construction of the world.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The language of matter is learnt from our fellow-beings like our own languages.

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Birth is the adoption of this common language, which the world gradually teaches us. The child cannot yet use it well, and most of the universe does not exist for him. Each being naturally copies the language of other beings, in order to be understood and taken into account by them, but he brings into it his own qualities.

Thus is formed the material Convention which everyone must adopt who wants to be a member of an organised world, who desires to be helped by his brothers in expressing himself: seeing that no one could have time or strength enough in his life to build an independent universe.

THE POET: Matter, being a creation of the Convention, is perpetually disintegrating. Each being is in his body a prey to a perpetual disease, and must be perpetually rebuilding his body.

The Convention fails us when we disobey its rules. When we offend against some "law of nature," the pact of the Convention suddenly breaks down in our body. Our body fails us, in accident, disease, or death, when we try to do something, to express some desire not admitted by the Convention.

The rules of the Convention are logical and finite. Being, which is infinite, cannot limit its activity.

In its growth, fatally, sooner or later, it breaks the laws of its body. Hence the inevitability of death.

The laws of matter are around us as a perpetual trap; we break them, often unknowingly, in very

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simple expressions of our being, easily avoidable had we known. That is accident.

EPISTEMOLOGY

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Any modification of the Inactual involved in the development of any individual, changes, for all others, the sum of their possibilities.

For the Inactual is common to all. What is not expressed belongs no more to one individual than to another.

THE POET: The unconscious belongs to all. It is like a dark sea upon which lighted ships sail, and which submits to no change except that imposed by each, as it passes.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: But each time a being wants to draw its desire out to the Inactual, it meets with the resistance—or the collaboration—of all that is already expressed.

And so beings perceive each other's actions.

THE POET: In the same way, at night, in a fog, a ship crossing the wake of another can, by the motions of the sea, estimate the power, the speed, the distance and the direction of the unknown passer-by.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Our senses are the powers that translate these impressions into the language of matter.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: *On Our Knowledge of Others:*

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Sources: our senses translate and register the modifications of our immediate Inactual.

Interpretation: our mind builds, for the explanation of those facts, several systems of possibilities.

Our decision: we choose one of those systems (here come in sureness of intuition, precision of intellect, habits of thought, chance).

Our test of the adopted hypothesis: we see how things happen in us and whether the cause we have singled out, working in us, would produce the effect to be accounted for. Seeing that our mind is in harmony and identity with the universe, this must be our test of our judgments of the universe. Moreover, no other test is possible, as, directly, we know only ourselves. And as we are part of the universe, its laws work in us and are discoverable in us. No one can judge except of what he finds in himself. The better anyone knows himself, the more outside things he can know.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: A being can find in himself, more or less developed, all that there is in the world.

Other beings are only unknown parts of ourselves.

THE POET: It is necessary, for our verification of knowledge, that we should know the internal workings, the "how things happen," in another being; in that being in whom are developed desires complementary to ours, and with whom creation is possible for us.

Love is therefore necessary for the intellect.

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THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The essential error is to allow our sentimental reaction to an external shock to be the source of our beliefs; to mistake impressions (of ourselves) and expressions (of ourselves or others) for realities. This error is fatal and natural, since the source of our knowledge is the variation of our desire when the Inactual varies. Our senses render us the immense service of representing reality as external and different from us, thus partly saving us from our personal impressions. But then we mistake that expression for a reality.

THE POET: *On Chronological Epistemology: The Evolution of the Senses:* Millions of centuries of evolution, through the vegetable and animal kingdoms, must have been necessary to build the powers of the senses. Perhaps that is the function of those two kingdoms on the earth.

The individual had to learn, in the course of immense periods: (1) that his feelings are not the only things that exist; (2) that an external world exists, which he infers solely from his sensations; (3) that that world is independent, and represents other wills than his own; (4) to represent that world to himself, by organising his sensations into consonant matter (which does not properly exist in low organisms); (5) to learn from others the invariable laws of matter constituted by common accord in the course of mineral, vegetable, and animal evolution. Plants exist only for themselves; they are the only solipsists. In the upward course of animality, the individual

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perceives the existence of others, and gets a more and more precise idea of them.

Mistakes were often made and dearly paid for. To have an illusion about the outside world and to trust to one's feelings in regard to it was often to incur death in the lower stages of life. That necessitated and created a belief in and certainty about the existence of an external world which was immutable and regular. Thus in the course of evolution, the individual necessarily lost the feeling that his senses created the outside world, and accustomed himself to regard them as mere registers. In this way, internal feeling, the only thing at first, the chief thing afterwards, tended to become a secondary thing at last; the individual learnt to consider that the variations of his internal feelings were important only as symptoms of outside changes. Thus was the language of matter gradually built up: an organisation into fixed laws of the individual's sensations derived from external phenomena. What is important to a being is not that he is the creator of that organisation, but that the organisation should be efficient; one that he can act upon without danger. It is also important that it should function as easily, as automatically, as rapidly, and as unconsciously as possible: for those modes will be advantageous to him. He needs his consciousness for the intricate problem, how to act, once he has truly represented the outside world. Consequently all consciousness of the working of the senses tends to disappear in the

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course of evolution: for every belief (or remembrance) that we can build the world as we like brings swift retribution and suffering.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Reason is an attempt to adjust some perception to the rest of our culture. Hence its absurdities when the culture is insufficient, even when the first intuition is true. Many people have true opinions that have no right to them, for they justify them by absurd reasons.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Matter is a language, but matter is a reality: it exists such that we can perceive it, in the being of others, which embraces the universe as a whole. It is an arrangement of primordial vibrations which are the elementary stuff of which all beings are made.

The resistances we meet in our action upon the Inactual are vibrations; they are matter; they are the rhythm in which other beings express themselves.

THE POET: *On Fear as an Example of the Working of the Language of Matter*: The physical impression: trembling and heart-beating precedes the panic. One thinks, I am going to be frightened. But the physical impression is not the cause of the moral one: it can be resisted (as Turenne resisted it) and need not be followed by terror. Sometimes it happens when no physical cause can produce it: a man used to gun practice trembles when he first hears real guns in war. There takes place, therefore—and it is a general process for all perception—(1) a perception by the being, through

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the Inactual, that something threatens him; (2) an immediate representation of it in his body: the being, to be able to judge of the fact, interprets it into his language, and it is only then that he becomes conscious of it—when he has expressed it; so that what is seen first is the immediate fact; (3) a decision whether or not there is occasion to fear. Even when the decision is negative, the trembling sometimes continues while the danger lasts. The trembling is the representation of the danger, not of the fear. But some are strong enough to stop it, since it has become unnecessary.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The actions of other beings towards us are determined by their opinion of us. They thus modify the Inactual. They give us a false personality: they make our action easier in one direction: they call for that action of ours which is appropriate to the character they have imposed upon us, and draw us towards it; and all the forces of the convention drive us on.

Then we act, not according to our desires, but in response to the opinions and the needs of others.

Hence the place in our life of actions independent of our essential desires. Many people express very little their peculiar desires: they have neither the time nor the choice. Thus the world draws each of us into a profession.

Few are strong enough to resist at all, and the strongest resist but little.

THE POET: We may do what the appeal of others

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makes us do and yet in the act express some of our own desires—in the way in which we do it. We can thus express our desire for order, for asceticism, for self-mastery, by cultivating the conscious desires that awaken in us when any action is involved.

EVIL

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Pleasure and pain spring from all acts of creation, for an act of creation is a manifestation of the Actual, which gives joy, and a rejection of the Inactual, which causes suffering.

In the Inactual, whose essence is the need to express all it contains, subsists, becoming more exasperated at each creation, that desire which no being will express: the desire to express suffering.

That is the principle of Evil.

The collective efforts of beings, who refuse to express pain and mutually help one another in their expressions, keep the Evil One at bay.

But any being who breaks the Convention is no longer helped by his brothers, but is left to his own devices; and the Evil One pounces upon him and makes him his channel of expression.

Thus any violation of the laws of the Convention brings about suffering—moral evil: the expression of pain by those who have not created it.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: A noble spectator is impatient of suffering: his pride rebels at the thought that

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another should suffer for him; but a sufferer suffers for all.

Hence a kind of charity—the need to relieve; and a kind of irony—the need to humiliate the sufferer.

And when the sufferer does not bear his pain well, there is then for the spectator the humiliation of having cast his burden upon a weak one; and irritation, and disdain.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: An accident happens when, a rule of the Convention having been broken by us, others refuse to take our expression into account. We are then alone and unprotected: hence suffering, ever lying in wait in the Inactual, comes upon us: hence at times it is impossible for us to express ourselves at all: death.

Hence, in the stricken one, the feeling that he has been betrayed, left by his brothers in a trap.

Hence his resentment against all, and specially against those related to him, who ought, as he cannot help feeling, to have stood by him.

THE POET: *On a Science of Evil*: There are evil ones who realise actively the desires of the Evil One: whose desire and joy it is to make men suffer. They are the channels through which evil flows into mankind.

But in the end the coalition of men baffles them and repulses their effort. Then the suffering of which they were the channels accumulates in them until they are shattered by it.

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They put themselves outside of the Convention. They make a pact with the Evil One. He gives them success and intelligence. But in the end, he takes possession of them.

They have success, by instinct men feel their power and give way to them.

They have intelligence: they know the ways of Evil, the ways of the distribution of suffering—things of which ordinary men refuse to be conscious.

But they step out of the Convention which is built against the Evil One; so no one helps them. When the Convention at last unmasks them, they are powerless and the easiest of victims of the Evil One.

There is a science of evil; the Evil One is the creator of it, but not, as he is made to boast, of the science of good. The evil ones know the ways of evil, but they are ignorant of the ways of good and of the Convention. All the evil ones ultimately ruin themselves through their lack of common sense.

Common sense is the privilege of the good.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Sufferers get relief by becoming evil. They pass on to others the suffering in them; they become channels instead of reservoirs of suffering.

The temptation of the sufferers: to become evil.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST (again): There is an evil one in every man: it is a more or less developed part in each of us.

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Anger: the Evil One, the need to make someone suffer, gets possession of us.

THE POET: *On the Method of the Evil Ones, Which Is Mainly Unconscious:* (1) They sense originality, which is a weakness, which causes the victim to advance beyond the protecting Convention. (2) They love. The evil one loves; he has the same desires as other men, but they are less in him, and more quickly satisfied. He uses those weaker desires of his as instruments: by collaboration, appeal, love, he draws those who have it to affirm and express their originality. (3) Then the evil ones abandon their collaboration.

Once his desire is satisfied, the evil one gives up the collaboration. That is the sin of Judas. It is a temptation to all, but good men resist it, for they have the feeling that the expression of others must be helped—the sense of the Convention.

The evil ones abandon the work when incomplete; work yet incomplete, outside the Convention, attracts the Evil One. This is because it is not yet realised, and has no power of resistance.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The policy of the evil ones is as follows: In love, it is seduction; in work, it is betrayal.

The evil one has a double joy: first, he realises his own desire, afterwards, his need to cause suffering.

Strife between two evil ones is frequent; the highest joy of an evil one is to see another crushed, for in that there is involved the greatest suffering.

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The good faith of the evil ones is often real, at least at the beginning. They satisfy their own desires; but they have little of the intelligence of the Convention, and so are ignorant of the desires of others. At the first, they love their victim. But they are easily offended by him, and this is natural.

It is easy to offend the evil ones for they call to evil in us.

THE POET: There is a fascination in the evil ones: they give us joys that others cannot give. Often, too, their victims love them.

Evil ones attach themselves especially to men of genius.

They often begin by helping them; and the man of genius is often the first to offend.

It is, indeed, a temptation for all who come near a genius to betray him, for all are weak in comparison with him. He causes them to suffer; he asks their help when their desires are exhausted. So all are tempted to leave him and to be avenged upon him.

Often heroism is needed not to betray a man of genius. Hence, in men of genius a mistrust of all whom they love and who love them: the mania of persecution.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Morality is essentially asceticism, the acceptance of suffering, wilful self-limitation, calm in the sacrifice of inferior desires. Asceticism gives patience and strength, enables us to resist the Evil One. That makes us invulnerable to the world, for all that the world can do is to deliver

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us to the Evil One. It enables us also to help others who suffer; to take upon ourselves their struggle against the Evil One: or to aid them in work which is outside the Convention.

THE POET: *On Laughter Directed Against one who Breaks the Rules:* The sense of the ridiculous is essentially the sense that the Convention is broken, and that someone is going to suffer. It is as if we felt that there is a certain quantity of suffering to be dealt out, and that any which is distributed to others is spared us.

This old barbarous laughter is the joy in the suffering of those who break the rules: a form of the joy in suffering.

Civilized laughter will be used as a warning to the men who leave the Convention to make them aware of their blunder in time, that so they may avoid the suffering.

THE THREE CONVENTIONS:—THE MATERIAL CONVENTION; THE MORAL CONVENTION; THE METAPHYSICAL CONVENTION

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Matter was constituted as a language by the First Convention, the Convention of the Universes, which all help us in its expression.

Morality was established as a mode of expression by the Convention of men.

The next task is the creation of the Convention of ideas: the foundation of a Metaphysical Convention.

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As yet there are only individual minds. There is no metaphysical world (no body of ideas true for all minds) as there is, more or less, a body of moral laws true for all men, and a body of material laws true for all things.

There must be established and made conscious between minds a relationship upon which they can depend.

The Convention has created physical laws, moral laws, but not yet metaphysical laws.

Therefore, most men have no metaphysical ideas; just as they would have no moral ideas and no physical world had they to create them.

THE POET: The task of philosophers is to find out desirable metaphysical laws, as they formerly discovered suitable moral ones, and as, in the beginning, beings found and established material laws. When that is accomplished, little by little metaphysical laws will be accepted by all.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The task of the Metaphysical Convention will be:

To organize the distribution of suffering and the struggle against evil;

To help all creative minds;

To awaken and develop in each being its metaphysical desires;

To prepare the language of ideas, chiefly through the Arts.

The failures and imperfections of the two existing Conventions, material and moral, arise from the

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fact that they are not upheld and enlightened by a Metaphysical Convention.

The three are only three different degrees of consciousness of the same facts.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: When the Moral Convention was established man was not wise enough to see the reason for it; he established it experimentally in order to preserve his existence.

And yet morality has been well founded, and being well founded it provides a rough criterion of metaphysical creation.

Its aims are to express life, to augment joy, to create more life (to do good to others), to struggle against evil (to avoid giving pain to others).

Metaphysics will have to find out the means to those aims; to discover first and to understand the principles upon which the Conventions have been based; and, if necessary, to alter them; by superior authority.

THE POET: The intuitions of the sacred books, which are essentially the consciousness of the Moral Convention in the freshness of its foundation, have so far been the basis of all philosophy. Philosophers have only tried to understand and to organize the world, the Convention, half revealed in them.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Therefore, there has been so far no metaphysics, because of the two great Conventional errors:

The error of the Material Convention—the reality

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of matter as separate from desire, the ultimate value of material law;

The error of the Moral Convention—the reality of the Absolute, the ultimate value of the moral law.

Those two errors are fundamentally one—a belief in the reality of the Absolute.

Each was necessary for the establishment of the corresponding Convention. In its Convention each was a truth. Without them the preliminary Conventions could not have been founded, and being could not have progressed to metaphysical consciousness.

Philosophy, in so far as it has only as yet realised the two old orders, cannot arrive at metaphysics; it can only reveal the ultimate absurdity of both, their intimate self-contradiction, and thus can do no positive work. In doing this, it is merely preparing the advent of metaphysics.

THE POET: The Absolute in the Moral Convention was called God. It was necessary to the existence of morality; man was not conscious yet of his power to create his destiny, and therefore needed the belief that it was created by the Absolute Good.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: To master physical desires the Moral Convention had to separate matter and spirit. It made of matter the enemy; and thus gave it an independent reality. Thus the Moral Convention consolidated the error of the Material Convention.

THE POET: The philosophers have only been com-

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mentators on the sacred books. They write like commentators; they have no style.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The need for a Metaphysical Convention is exemplified most clearly in the lack of all control over creative individual power. Man creates naturally a number of ideas, images and forms without limit. He is obliged to choose some, which he tries to make true. He expresses these in collaboration with his brothers: past, present, future, human and non-human (things and ideas).

Inevitably, many are rejected and remain true only for individuals.

Thus, everywhere in art and life are found a great number of ideas, images and forms, unknown to or rejected by the masses. Some gather together a few adherents. These stand in a sort of gradation from truth to error, according to the will power and collaborative strength of their adherents.

They really exist for some, sometimes for one only, and it seems to him then that they are simply not seen by others.

PSYCHOLOGY

THE SELF

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Responsibility is the first condition of being; existence in a universe means the power to modify it. That power can exist only for a being who is able to bear the consequences of those modifications, who has the strength to maintain them, who can bear responsibilities.

A person, once created, is imperishable: its responsibility keeps it in existence. When it appeared all existing beings took a decision in relation to it, accepting or rejecting it in some measure, and thus all their ultimate developments, all the posterior development of the universe is based on the existence of that person; on the fact that at any moment it is there to maintain (and bear the consequences of) its actions.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: That does not imply the continuance of the person in an unchanged state.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: If any one being could disappear altogether the equilibrium of the universe would be upset. The whole work of the universe from the birth of that being onwards would crumble down.

THE POET: The world would have perpetually to

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begin all over again and thus would vaguely move on through eternity, in total chaos, remaining impersonal and unconscious, finding no way out.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Desire can be conscious only of itself. If our desires were not realised in our actions, if we were submitted to an external determinism, our desires would not be aware of our actions, nor should we—unless that determinism should help or hinder some free expression of our desires.

Desire which could not express itself would not know itself, nor, therefore, other desires, which it knows by their interference with its expression.

Hence consciousness implies liberty.

Every conscious being is free.

Every being is infinite.

Being free and infinite, every conscious being is immortal.

The necessity of immortality is in the infinity of desire, which no expression satisfies.

THE POET: Existence, consciousness, liberty, responsibility, are four aspects of one fact.

THE POET: *On the Body as a Vase:* A liquid is only visible—responsible—in a vase; it can then be felt and handled. If the vase is broken or upset, the liquid escapes; and without a vase we can have no liquid. And yet the vase is neither the liquid, nor the cause of the liquid, nor does its destruction destroy the liquid.

Thus it is with the body and desire.

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THE METAPHYSICIAN: That argument is purely negative: it does not picture the relationship between desire, or soul, and body; but it destroys ordinary materialism.

THE POET: Consciousness, or desire, may survive, or reappear, even although its physical basis, the body, is done away with. A sensation really exists in us only while the physical event which causes it is in progress: that may be called its physical basis. Once that external cause is over, the sensation dies, that is, is forgotten, more or less quickly. But memory remains: so it is capable of coming again more or less vividly. When we need the sensation its responsibility recalls it—the fact that it has become a constituent part of our being, which sometimes needs to resuscitate it. Then it comes back, and without its physical basis (the external event). Many do not come back to us. But all may; none are lost. We may be to the total being what such sensations are to us; it may behave to us as we do to them.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: But we do not wish that all our life should come back, nor that it should ever be conscious without intermission. All we want is that it should come back sometimes, in its most important parts, and so never be lost altogether.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The existence of the higher inclinations of man proves the future life from the determinist point of view. No function but has its use, and its use in view of the preservation of being.

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Evolution in this world leads towards egoism, not goodness, the practical, not the true, the useful, not the beautiful. Desire for all impersonal things, love for all higher things, must then be the beginning of an adaptation to new conditions of being, as yet unperceived. We can only perceive that to which we are adapted.

Hence, for us, the adaptation must prove the existence of a state of things to which we are being adapted. Desire for justice, truth, beauty, proves first, the existence of a world of ideas, and then the fact that we are destined to live in it: the kingdom that is not of this world.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: There exists in each of us a sort of witness, a part which, whatever happens to us, whether it be suffering or joy, destruction or fear, is present and just looks on, unmoved, unaltered, eagerly on the watch, unaffected by outward or inward events.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Is that the ultimate Self?

THE POET: Is that the one eternal self, the straight line, cold, impassible, immutable, serene, in full self-possession, above all individual variable rhythms, and living, willed, felt, incomplete, changing desires?

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: It does not vary: it disappears and reappears. Life reappears or disappears with it. One does not exist in us without the other. How it goes and how it comes, passes our comprehension. It is consciousness. All things exist only in

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as far as they participate in it, as they are a sort of reflection of its light, among their warmth of life. It is impersonal: it is just as keenly interested in other beings as in ourselves. In it is no fear of its disappearance. Occasionally we seem to be abstracted from the whole of our life and for a few moments to live in it only. Then all things and happenings are indifferent to us, and all are equally important. But we cannot remain long in it.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: It seems to be a separate fragment of the total self, of the absolute, which is impossible in its entirety.

THE RHYTHM OF BEING: FALL AND RESURRECTION

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: To express a desire, to render it perfectly clear to itself, is to satisfy it. The aim of all desire is to become as intense—as clear and as conscious—as possible.

The satisfied desire, having reached perfection, ceases, as all absolute being must annihilate itself.

But in the course of its expression desire has rejected all round itself an unsatisfied Inactual, which becomes more and more intense. Thus the satisfaction of desire is only apparent and temporary. After a while, its Inactual resuscitates it.

Thus all desire, in its expression, is submitted to a rhythm of elevation, fall and resurrection, which is infinite.

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THE METAPHYSICIAN: After the fall of desire, the satisfied part does not come back in its previous form. Thus in the death of the body, the physical desires, which life has satisfied (or exhausted, which is the same) die. They no longer come back to express themselves in the physical body, and the body disappears.

But those desires, in the course of their expression, have created subtler and unsatisfied ones, which survive, and thus desire is subdivided into ideas.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Sleep and death belong to the same order of occurrences: they are falls, although in different modes, of desire into the Inactual.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Sleep is the fall of desire in the course of one mode of expression. When it comes back, the desire returns to the same expression as before, in its preserved unity. Death is a fall in which the desire, having subdivided itself into ideas in the course of its expression, gives up that expression, now become a hindrance.

The body is a hindrance to ideas. By its actualising power, it tends to keep us in the zone of desire: it is an obstacle to the subdivision of desires into ideas.

At its resurrection from death, being goes on to the expression of its ideas, and no longer of its desires, which are now past.

THE POET: During our fall, sleep or death, our will is exhausted: the quantity of force that came to us from the general being, our original Inactual, has

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become perfect. So we become a sort of abstract of ourselves: we exist only as a possibility.

But the general being which created us as one of its subdivisions cannot go on in its life without us. It fills us again with will, force and life, and we awake again and go on.

We have gone back into our Inactual, in communication with the All: we have become the All again, as we were before our birth. We have been born again: we have been re-filled with life universal.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: We can study in ourselves the death of some of our desires and their transformation into ideas which spread over the whole of our posterior life; also the sleep and awakening of our desires.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: We shall find thus the knowledge and the mechanism of our own immortality.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Thus the shame and the depression after love. The perfected desire, being expressed, falls; the rest of man feels it has been deceived. Then desires and ambitions other than the physical ones are necessary to keep the lovers together.

Thus before all intense creation comes a period of depression and despair.

THE POET: Some heavy object is thrown into the waves, on a sloping beach, as the tide comes up. Each wave has its force as it surges upward; when it falls, it has less power. It brings the object upwards

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each time a little higher on the beach, and never takes it down. The object goes steadily upwards: it waits where it falls for the next wave to take it up higher. Thus goes desire. The waves are its successive lives; the intervals are its sleeps. The beach which keeps it up during its sleep is the whole world. If the object is light, the sea takes it back when retiring, and it does not progress. The weight of the object is the personal quality of each being.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Regularity is established when the desire has reached the highest possible intensity in the language it expresses itself in. Otherwise a higher expression comes and breaks the rule. Thus vibration is established—equality in rhythm. The desire, called back by the need of the world, returns, rapidly goes up the accustomed way, is perfected and falls. Called back again, it returns again.

THE POET: Thus the fall of a body, after a time of acceleration, reaches to a constant maximum speed. The regularity of the classics.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The basis of all language is the first vibration of being: the primitive universal rhythm: the first short ascent of being towards pleasure and the first fall, infinitely repeated. This original vibration, of matter or ether, is the physical element all beings are made of. All further language is a modification and a complication of that primitive rhythm, under the diversity of desires.

THE POET: All language, all expression, is an arrangement of rhythms. There is a truth for

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rhythms: some are found in nature, or feeling, and are true; some are conventional to men; some are original; some are common. There are the rhythms of nature: of the sea, for the eye and the ear; of the mountains, for sight and feeling; and the long slow rhythm of the plains. The culture of rhythms is in the arts. Style, which makes works of art last, is a matter of rhythm: it appeals in us to deeper and older powers than ideas: to primordial desires.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: All rhythm which we perceive interferes with the intimate rhythm of our being, helps it or combats it in its rise and fall. In each being is a constant struggle with all external rhythms. Rhythm is the very expression of life, and interferes with all life. Hence its power, outside of and beyond what it is made conventionally to mean. In it is the joy of being, the elemental pleasure of life which finds an expression: a joy prior to all meaning or use or content of the expression: the first joy. Hence the power of music. Hence the pleasure new rhythms give us.

THE POET: The power of myths, their depth, all we discover in them, come from the fact that they represent some antique elementary event of nature: some ancient fundamental rhythm, found under other layers, in all life. Hence the value of the old classics. Hence the value of pure poetical comparison or imagination. Hence the help found in old mythological religions: a help which modern reasonable religion fails to give us.

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THE PSYCHOLOGIST: And yet, even the ultimate charm of rhythm is delusion. Music, art, poetry, in the end, leave life empty. What is alone worth while is the seeking of the knowledge of self—the desire expressed under the languages. Rhythm is only expression, self-knowledge is being itself.

INTO THE WORLD OF IDEAS

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Man in his present state is not capable of bearing the responsibility for his actions, which the world is perpetually throwing back upon him.

The consequences of a man's actions become so complicated, so subtle and so far-stretching that the present mind of man cannot grasp them, nor his present nature bear the load of them.

Therefore, immortality, which responsibility demands, and without which the world could not go on, cannot be the immortality of man, which would be totally inadequate.

Man must be raised to a power corresponding, in its complexity, subtlety and scope, to the power of the consequences of his acts.

Each moment in a man, each wave of desire which has caused some action, must become separately responsible for it, because of the complex contradictions between the innumerable moments.

Therefore the necessary and unavoidable responsibility of man demands his subdivision into Ideas,

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which, being so much more subtle, intricate, mobile, and far spread, will alone be able to cope effectually with the consequences of a man's life, and so enable the world's course to go on.

THE POET: *On Resurrection*: Once a desire has disappeared its co-desires need it for their own existence, which has been built upon it. They will recreate it by their appeal to the general Inactual—recreate it, or its responsible ideas.

Thus a fallen being goes through a period of fictitious existence. He lives only in the memory of the world. The rest of Being can still build upon him without his actual presence, but it is on condition that, sooner or later, he will reappear to take up his responsibilities.

Thus, on waking up, we find ourselves confronted with all that others have done in reference to us during our sleep.

So perhaps a being may reappear sooner or later, according to his importance to others.

Thus resurrection becomes, through the accumulating need the world has of a being after its disappearance, an ineluctable certainty.

THE POET: *On the Other Life*: The material language will be given up. The physical desires, having been expressed, will pass on to a sort of cosmic stage: the being we now are will appear, to the multitudinous Ideas, as the universe now appears to us. Our consciousness of our Ideas will be infinitely more intense than our self-consciousness, even as human

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thought is more intense than the self-consciousness of the universe.

As the laws of the world live in us, under the blossoming of our desires, so our being will live under the marvellous multitude of the Ideas, as complete, as powerful as ever, and yet thrown back into darkness, half unconscious, eclipsed by new splendours—as the cosmic laws live active in us, accepted of us, half forgotten.

Thus our desires will blossom forth, changed into universes, covered with the innumerable Ideas sprung from out of our life.

Other men, whom we have not known in life, will hardly exist for us, or else exist as the astronomical worlds now exist for our world: as an influence, as an enigma, points shining in the night, when our atmosphere is clear. When it is disturbed by the agitations of this earth, we do not even see them. We, the Earth, have parted from them. Thus at death shall we part from men.

But our beloved ones, whose desires have mixed with ours, and have, together with ours, formed new common desires and ideas, they will still exist for us and with us. In our inseparable ideas we are commingled for ever.

Thus the Earth, Sun and Moon have kept their relationship. With our loved ones we shall be as a world developing in ourselves.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Man seems to us much shorter-lived than universes. And so Ideas might

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seem to us much shorter-lived than man. But at each stage of concentration the rhythm of time changes. Time is only our consciousness of the passing of the Inactual into the Actual. We feel the Actual as Past, settled, unchangeable; the Inactual as Future, undecided, vague. As it becomes actual, the future becomes the past; and we live on the present: the point of the meeting of the two.

In the world of Ideas, the organization of time will change. As men have grouped themselves in races and families, so the Ideas will group themselves according to their affinities, irrespective of the time of their appearance in this world.

THE POET: For our Ideas have associated with and are linked to Ideas long past or yet to come in human time. All those Ideas call to each other, in collaboration or struggle, and cannot live one without the other.

Therefore the world of Ideas can come into being only when the whole world of desires is accomplished. When physical life shall have run its course, the Ideas will resuscitate in a new time, in languages and in a grouping now inconceivable.

Our human individuality will be dispersed over long periods of the ideal time, in diverse places of the future space, according to the innumerable variety of the Ideas.

Yet it will remain one, as a cosmic desire, a physical force or a chemical essence remains one in all beings and time.

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THE METAPHYSICIAN: Man is the ultimate expression in the material language. The universe does not die to subdivide itself into men; but men (and thus the universe) die to subdivide themselves into Ideas.

Therefore, in the normal course of time, man at death falls into nothingness for millions of centuries: until the physical universe, deprived one by one of all its beings, falls into nothingness: resolved into Ideas, perfected.

But all existence in the fallen state, sleep or death, is outside time. Millions of centuries will be as a night's sleep.

Then the ideal world will arise all together. Judged by our time, its existence will be short. Seen from the inside, it will be complete.

THE POET: That is the Resurrection of the Dead, which is an awakening. From the moment of death until the resurrection there is no consciousness.

All the dead are dead indeed: no ideal existence can coincide with the material world.

Only at the end of the world is the Resurrection of the Dead.

ESCHATOLOGY

DESTINY

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The whole of the desire of this world will come in time to its fulfillment and perfection, like all individual beings. All that is actual is exhaustible.

But behind matter, and in it, is the infinite element which is the basis of all things and beings. All we know of that element shows us that it registers and keeps and accumulates all that happens, and lets nothing be lost. It could not otherwise have risen to man, in whom all its previous experiences are compressed and gathered up.

THE POET: Therefore, this world itself having disappeared altogether, will yet remain as a possibility and an experience and an acquirement of the Total Being. The Inactual, ever unsatisfied, will create then new worlds, or keep them going after this has gone. Thus it will base itself in its further expression upon this lost expression, and will need it more and more, until it has to re-create it.

But then it will be re-created in new circumstances; it will be altered by the appearance of all that came after its fall. Thus it will be both identical and different, in so far as the differences will only be a

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greater degree of expression called for by the surging of new responsibilities. For the new worlds demand that it should be that very same world upon which they have based themselves.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Thus a plan of Being exists, in the manner in which a plan exists in the seed of a tree, liable to be modified, but bound to be accomplished, and accomplished completely. Being repeats itself, as a tree come out of a seed repeats the previous tree, that is, more or less. But it has all the possibilities that ever were expressed in all the previous trees that went to its making.

So that, sooner or later, each individual trait of any individual tree of the past must be repeated in some future tree, since the spreading out of Being is infinite. Besides which, new traits will be added.

Such is our immortality, our resurrection, which is the same fact as the reproduction we witness in all species.

Thus we shall come back, as we are, in a future world, which will be this world, more or less modified, and in different circumstances, but essentially still us, and still this world.

When this world will reproduce itself, and be produced again, it will reproduce us also.

THE POET: The ideas are the flowers of this tree of our Life: in relation to the production of them it is planned: they determine the plan.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: This plan of Being is Destiny. Known at any moment, it would enable us to

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foresee only the general directions of the future, but not precise events, for the plan is ever in the making. At any moment the Inactual interferes with it by the creation of new beings. Thus no being is ever forced by Destiny to do any precise thing, as in any organism no cell is ever forced to do anything against its will. But Destiny depends upon the fact that the will shall work in a certain direction. If it does not, if the individual does not conform to Destiny, measures are taken against him; he is extinguished and expelled, as an organism extinguishes and expels a rebellious part.

THE POET: Sometimes it does not succeed in doing so: hence disease and death. But generally it does, because the greatest number of parts remain true to the covenant.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: It may thus be said that each being is eternally present and developing, but the world forgets this while it does not need it.

THE POET: Our dreams might as well complain of being forgotten on our waking up, as we of not being perpetually immortal.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: By far the largest part of our actions are unwilled: all the motions in any act we perform, all their consequences we let loose upon the air, the ground, other beings, are not of our willing. We pursue an aim. The aim alone is ours. In the means used we follow only one series of consequences, that which leads to our aim; but numberless others are set working.

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Our conscious will uses only a small part of our actions. All the unwilling, all that is merely unvalued means to our aim, all we let loose upon the world, is the stuff Destiny works upon, and it is the largest part of our lives. The world has to see to it, to account for it.

THE POET: Thus with the insect: Destiny has regulated it. While it only looks for food or satisfies some obscure need for activity, it accomplishes huge and complicated works it knows nothing of, perpetuates its race and fulfils many useful tasks in the world.

Even so we are used by Destiny, and see no more of its aims than the insect does.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: *On the Idea of Cause:*

All the elements of a fact being present, it need not follow that the fact should come to pass. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

THE POET: Something inactual comes into it as well.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Reality is less highly organised than our intelligence. History is full of accidents which are the explosions of the Inactual, and sometimes witnesses an inexplicable wrong-going of things, where the study of the causes gives no satisfaction.

THE POET: Accidents are the intervention of metaphysics into physics.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The world requires that

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all we have chosen to be should be accomplished: we took upon ourselves at our birth a part of the general being; the world took that into account and acted upon that understanding.

Thus the intense appeal of the world compels:

To total action those that do not act their will:
in accidents and wars.

To total suffering those that have not suffered
their lot: in illnesses.

To total thinking those that have not thought out
their thought: in madness.

For in such cases we become instruments of the world's action, or suffering, or thought, even as the insects are.

There are then two sorts of men:

Those who accomplish their destiny,

And those whose destiny is accomplished upon
them.

THE POET: Wars, accidents, illnesses, madness are like uncaused explosions of a destiny which has not been accomplished willingly, of a tremendous will which it was our duty to express and which we have not expressed. Such explosions break across all our logic and order.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The submission to a destiny we have not willed is repaid to us by knowledge; of ourselves in unwilled circumstances, of others, to whom we are submitted, of the system of the world, seen from inside. The inactive participant sees things from inside whereas the active participant sees

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himself chiefly, and others only as a resistance to his action.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Instinct is the carrying out of a plan of which we are not conscious. It occupies the greater part of our lives.

THE POET: The laws of nature are the instincts of the world.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: We will, eternally, all that is, since the whole of being wills the whole of its expression, and we are a part of it.

The only philosophical attitude is communion with reality: the affirmation of life. Liberty is the essence of the world: all that happens comes from some free being; every being is completely free and expresses its will completely. All will is done. Our will at present will be done, and therefore is done. All we seem to have to bear is the battle we fight to create the state of the world in which our will is done. Or our will is done, our desire is perfected and exhausted and satisfied, in the fighting.

THE POET: As, confronted with any event, the ancients said: "It is the will of God: let the will of God be done"; so we must learn to say: "It is our will; let our will be done."

THE IDEAS

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Original ideas come not through research and meditation, but of themselves, when they please—often at times inconvenient to us.

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We are not their masters. They leave us only when they are complete; and they pour forth their associations without taking into account our desires or needs.

They exalt our beings and then, physically even, exhaust us in their expression in us.

Unless we write them down and so capture them, they often disappear never to return. And they must be captured swiftly, for they are elusive. Our brain and consciousness are too weak for them.

Pascal gives witness: "*Hasard donne les pensées; hasard les ôte; point d'art pour conserver ni pour acquérir; Pensée échappée, je la voulais écrire; j'écris, au lieu, qu'elle m'est échappée; cela me fait souvenir de ma faiblesse, que j'oublie à toute heure.*"

When we begin writing them down, we know not where they may lead us. Often, we see at first only their insignificant parts.

They lead us absolutely.

Nietzsche says: "*Man hört, man sucht nicht; man nimmt, man fragt nicht wer da giebt; wie ein Blitz leuchtet ein Gedanke auf, mit Nothwendigkeit, in der Form ohne Zögern; ich habe nie eine Wahl gehabt.*"

Hence the poverty of our expression when we write them down; we do not understand them well; we torture or spoil them. What we put down is not the Ideas, but our imperfect remembrance of their coming: our impressions at their visitation.

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Rousseau: "Si j'avais jamais pu écrire le quart de ce que j'ai vu et senti, sous cet arbre! Tout ce que j'ai pu retenir de ces foules de grandes vérités qui, en un quart d'heure, m'illuminèrent sous cet arbre, a été bien faiblement épars dans les trois principaux de mes écrits."

Nietzsche: "Ach, was seid ihr doch ihre meine geschriebenen und gemalten Gedanken—Niemand erräth mir daraus, wie ihr in eurem Morgen aussahet, ihr plötzlichen Funken und Wunder meiner Einsamkeit, ihr meine alten geliebten, schlimmen Gedanken!"

Therefore other men rarely recognise the primitive force of our ideas; great artists are those that can impress men with that force.

Often the Ideas come in multitudes; we cannot write them down all at once; they are too numerous; they have to wait. One crosses our mind while we write down another, unsettles it—sometimes causes it to be lost; sometimes gets lost itself.

Thus many are lost, as with Rousseau.

There must have existed many thinkers who lived only for the exhausting pleasure that Ideas give; not caring to transmit them on to men. Others who, once back into their normal state, did not believe in them, nor in their importance.

Others who have considered them undesirable, because of the suffering of physical and intellectual exhaustion which they cause.

Hence the modesty of true genius; men of genius

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know Ideas do not come from them, nor are under their control.

Nietzsche: "Man würde in der That die Vorstellung, blos Inkarnation, blos Mundstück, blos Medium übermächtiger Gewalten zu sein, kaum abzuweisen wissen."

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Things happen as though the Ideas existed, independently of us, and used our consciousness to express themselves intensely for one moment, then disappeared, without troubling about us. We keep only the remembrance of them.

And that is even what happens.

In the subdivision of being—Universes, Men, Ideas—the Ideas are superior to us in will and intensity, as much as we are superior to the earth. The plan of being is made in relation to them, with an aim to the production of them; it is made by them, more than by the rest of beings. Thus, each such Idea is a being superior to us, infinitely more intense, which is born, lives and dies in us, as we in the earth.

They seem to be parts of us; they are so, as the more precise is a part of the less concentrated; so we are not their masters, but they ours.

The rest of our lives is organised from our remembrance of them.

Born into us, from parts of us which concentrate themselves, the Ideas raise and enlighten us at their birth, but they cannot live in the material world. Their presence itself disorganises our physical func-

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tions: breathing and circulation are upset, the head is disturbed, the brain rapidly exhausted. If their intensity were continual, madness would seize us. Thus, in the struggle against material expressions, the Ideas fall.

THE POET: They will come back in the ideal world, at the end of physical time. It is enough for them to have been born. Henceforth immortal, they can wait securely for the world to come.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Our chief mistake lies in thinking that we produce them.

THE POET: The ancients were wiser, who believed in Revelation. The Ideas do reveal themselves to us: the initiative of their coming belongs to them. They exist ever in their abstractions, in their possibilities, as parts of us, intense and strong—as men, going forth into the waste earth, are stronger and more intense than it. The earth neither produces nor leads them, except in a vague general way of which she is not the mistress, but of which they are the masters. So the Ideas come into us, if they find favourable ground, and while in us reign over us as men reign over the land. We may prepare the ground for them, call them. “But will they come when we do call for them?” Genius is visited by them. Talent studies them, which is our duty. As the earth can crush and end us, accidentally, so can we the Ideas, by ignorance and mishap, for they are the best of us.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: So they come by their will

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more than by ours, according to the general Plan of Being, which they had more share in the making of than we had. They accomplish, beyond us, the passing of Desire into Ideas.

THE POET: The Spirit bloweth where it listeth. The ancient theories of divine inspiration are therefore true. At the foundation of religions were the revelations of Ideas to the prophets. And in times of old, the powers of our senses being fresher and greater, the power of our intellect less formal, the sense that the Ideas came from beyond us predominated, and we cast them forth into the outer world, in the shape of radiant apparitions or divine voices. The Gods were seen of old by the prophets, and may still be seen by prophets to-day. And nevertheless all vision of the Gods is delusion.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Another mistake of ours is to mix with our perception of the Ideas our own interpretation of them: our ordinary knowledge and intellect. And that mistake is well-nigh unavoidable. Thus in the books of man, among the general ruin of systems, Ideas remain and shine here and there, from antiquity to the present day, as great and impressive of old as now, and now as of old.

THE POET: Thus it has been truly said that the aim of mankind is the production of men of genius, for in them the Ideas incarnate. And so by them the Plan of the World is partially revealed to us.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: And it behoves the so-

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cieties of men to be careful and arrange themselves in harmony with the Plan of Being: else they run into catastrophe. The world cannot live without organisation; and it has no road to organisation except by the fitful light of the passing Ideas.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: What we call an idea, in our language, is only the remembrance, the written or spoken expression we kept of an Idea. The Idea is that part of us which lived in us for a moment of a superhuman life, when we "conceived" it. Thereafter it was dead; we remember it, speak of it to our brothers, rouse in them similar Ideas, if their desires will be responsive to our expressions.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: An Idea, coming to us, is necessarily true. It is utterly beyond our intellect, and our individual experience, and the experience of our race: it is verily incommensurable with them. Therefore it comes from none of these springs, but from the deeper grounds of Being, and is necessarily true.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: But in trying to express it, even to ourselves, we immediately and unavoidably mix it with our customary errors. Originality of mind is no sign that the Ideas are present. It is no condition of their coming. Sometimes it warps them, sometimes it helps them. Originality belongs to the world of men, and is not genius, which is the faculty of receiving the Ideas.

THE POET: Thus are the purposes of this world fulfilled: in the passing of Desire into Ideas.

PRINCIPIA METAPHYSICA

I. ONTOLOGY: THE ACTUAL AND THE INACTUAL

(1) Every existence is infinite; every expression is limited. The expression of any thought or being is necessarily incomplete.

(2) There are two parts in every being: the Actual, which is the expressed, and the Inactual, which is the unexpressed, and they grow together, infinitely, the one out of the other.

(3) The aim of every being is to express itself: to render as intense (as conscious) as possible the desires which are its essence.

(4) To express itself, Being has to concentrate on some chosen part of itself, and to reject other parts; thus, in its expression, Being divides and sub-divides itself into individuals.

(5) Pain and Pleasure are the twin concomitants of creation, which is expression, which is division.

(6) Pleasure is the self-consciousness of desire: the aim of every being.

(7) Pain is the consciousness of loss which accompanies the rejection by Desire of part of itself in the course of its expression.

(8) There is in every being the instinct of concentration: of the necessity to choose and reject.

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(9) Concentration in a Universe produces men; in a man, ideas.

(10) The Inactual is common to all: individuals are concentrations of the One inactual Being in different directions.

II. COSMOLOGY: LANGUAGES AND CONVENTIONS

(11) Being expresses itself through languages.

(12) Languages are established by Conventions, which are necessary collaborations of certain categories of beings to help each other in their expression.

(13) Matter is the language of desire on the plane of the Universes.

(14) Action is the language of desire on the plane of men.

(15) In speech and art are the beginnings of the language of desire on the plane of ideas. (Most speech is action.)

(16) Beings, in their expression of themselves, modify the Inactual around them. As the Inactual is common to all, beings communicate with each other through their perception of the modification of the Inactual.

(17) The senses are the powers which translate perceptions of the modifications of the Inactual into languages.

(18) In the organization of the world, the pain

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which emanates from all creative activity is being perpetually rejected: partially non-expressed. A quantity of suffering accumulates in the Inactual, and tries to express itself through individuals. That is the Evil Element in the Universe: Evil is pain felt separately from its cause, creation.

(19) The Conventions protect against evil the beings that belong to them.

(20) Accidents are violations of Conventional laws. Such violations, being outside the protection of the Convention, entail suffering.

(21) Man belongs to two Conventions:—The Universal Convention: which is the Material Convention; the Human Convention: which is the Moral Convention.

(22) Man's specific work is to prepare the third Convention: the Convention of Ideas, which is the Metaphysical Convention.

III. PSYCHOLOGY: FALL AND RESURRECTION

(23) Existence entails responsibility.

(24) Responsibility entails immortality.

(25) Liberty is the power of expressing one's desires; it is a concomitant of responsibility; and both, of existence itself.

(26) As every being is infinite, liberty entails immortality.

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(27) The foundation in men of the world of Ideas is the beginning of an immortality which is continued in a different order of being.

(28) When a desire has reached the highest intensity it is capable of, it ceases and falls: Perfection is annihilation.

(29) A fall is a return into the ever-unsatisfied Inactual, which refills the fallen being with new forces, and resurrects it. Desire follows an infinite rhythm of rise, fall and resurrection.

(30) There are two forms of Fall: sleep and death. In sleep a desire comes back as desire, in the same expression; in death, a desire gives up its former expression, and comes back on the next plane, subdivided into ideas.

(31) Ideas need a new language, as matter is too ponderous an expression for them. The formation of the world of ideas entails the death of the material Universe.

(32) The basis of all language is the elementary vibration of the Inactual, the first rise and fall of desire. Thus all language, all expression, is rhythm.

IV. ESCHATOLOGY: DESTINY

(33) Universes also reach Perfection and die, in the world of Ideas and the realisation of the Metaphysical Convention.

(34) Nothing is ever lost for the Inactual; and the Inactual never ceases from creating.

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(35) A fallen world is reproduced in new circumstances: that is, among new worlds which the Inactual has created during the fall-period of that world.

(36) Every being reappears in and with its world, again and again in new circumstances.

(37) There exists for each being a permanent Abstraction, which is its true imperishable essence: a plan of that being, which life makes real again and again in varying circumstances.

(38) There exists a Plan of all Abstractions, which is Destiny; but the Inactual is for ever coming into the Plan with new creations.

(39) In Destiny the will, or desire, of each being is completely accomplished.

(40) Destiny is the will of the Total Being, which is One: The One striving towards Self-Consciousness for ever, as its self-consciousness has its infinitude for object, and the Inactual grows with the growth of the Actual.

V. ETHICS

The duty of man is to be at once the Discoverer and the Creator of Being, by reaching full self-consciousness:

(41) *To understand* the will of the Total Being, and to understand that his own will is identical with it.

(42) *To feel*, in pleasure, the development of the

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Total Being, and to bear, in pain, his own share of the suffering of Creation.

(43) *To act*: to express in his languages the Total Being: that is, on man's plane, to resolve the desires given him into ideas: to carry out the Moral Convention; and to lay the foundations of the Metaphysical Convention.

PRINCIPIA METAPHYSICA: A COMMENTARY

I. ONTOLOGY: THE ACTUAL AND THE INACTUAL

I. Every existence is infinite; every expression is limited. The expression of any thought or being is necessarily incomplete.

I say: "A man is going by in the street." It is impossible for me to express all I can see and feel about that man; it is impossible for me even to see or feel it; it does not even interest me. For instance, I do not take any notice of the colour of his hair, the length of his coat, the expression on his face; the analysis of any feature would spread into the infinite. I choose to select the very general fact that he belongs to the human species, and I go into no details. To get all the details, I should have to fix him at one particular unit of time; it is conceivable that then the total of the details would be finite. But the next instant most of the elements of the picture: his position, his expression, etc., would have changed; and no unit of time is short enough for me to catch him in a static position. He is in a perpetual transformation, and therefore infinite. To say anything about him, I have to choose what interests me in him, and leave out the rest: otherwise, I could

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say nothing. And even if I could say everything about him, it would come to the same result as saying nothing, since in a complete description of him there would be no purpose. I should have insisted on nothing, and a listener would not know the aim or point of my speech: I could proceed to no deduction. My thought about the man would not have progressed. Thus all expression, all thinking even, is choosing; and is by nature, even by aim, incomplete.

2. There are two parts in every being: the Actual which is the expressed, and the Inactual, which is the unexpressed, and they grow together infinitely, the one out of the other.

The distinction is not between the Conscious and the Unconscious. The word "Unconscious" is a mere negative, and may cover widely different categories of being. Thus, many things for us become unconscious because they are expressed, absolutely in the actual, and so trouble us no more: for instance, in part, our past. Also some things are unconscious because they are quite inactual still for us and far from being expressed: for instance, our future. The Inactual is the infinite mass of our possibilities which we have not expressed yet; our future belongs to it; some of our past also, because it may recur. The Inactual grows with the growth of the Actual, because to actualise anything, we reject parts of it, which creates problems. When I say "A man is going by"—having chosen to concentrate on the motion of the

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man, I create new problems, as: Where is he going to? What is he going there for? etc., problems which were not in my consciousness while I was merely looking at the man without expressing anything about him.

A new Inactual is thus created with every new Actual; and inversely, from that new Inactual a new Actual will come: the answers to the above questions: Where? What for? etc., and this new Actual in turn will create a new Inactual; and so on ad infinitum.

3. The aim of every being is to express itself: to render as intense (as conscious) as possible the desires which are its essence.

When we abstract ourselves from the outside world; at a quiet moment, close our eyes, listen to nothing outside, and just feel our existence, if we are in good health, we perceive and enjoy in ourselves a sort of warm vibration or rippling current of life, which is pure pleasure, which is pure desire. That is the very essence of our being. In certain acts of ours, it becomes more intense, and bursts out into our ordinary crowded and busy life: in eating when we are hungry, in physical or mental exercise, in love. The aim of all our acts is to intensify that desire, to increase that pleasure of life: generally, our work is designed to get the means to that increase: food, exercise, love, etc. But whatever the means, the aim is the same, whether it be in the lowest sensualism, or in the purest

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joys of asceticism or intellectuality. We can even perceive, when we get to that fundamental desire in us, that it has a sort of impersonal quality: it is not so much particularly "us" as running through us. It is not only our being, but the general being, there is in it communion with the whole of being, of nature, animals, trees and waters and air. Indeed many people are conscious of it only in the presence of nature, not being able to get to it sufficiently in themselves, owing to ill health or other causes.

4. To express itself Being has to concentrate on some chosen part of itself, and to reject other parts; thus, in its expression, Being divides and subdivides itself into individuals.

The only grounds we have to judge the General Being by are the facts of our experience. There we touch reality, however limited; and we must use our intelligence in trying to see how the limitation works, and how much of our experience is the General Being's. As we are parts of the General Being, its ways are to be seen in us. Thus, psychological experience is the basis of metaphysics. Metaphysics is the psychology of the Universe.

Besides which, we cannot help ourselves. As we cannot know anything else, we have to judge by our own experience. Only we must be careful not to mix the abstract workings of our intelligence with the facts of our psychological experience. Our intelligence is a tool; we must apply it to facts, and not

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allow it to produce conceptions mechanically by working upon itself and its processes and not upon facts. When it works upon itself, intelligence produces logic, which is a fine, interesting and instructive fabric, but has only the slenderest connections with reality. We must beware of admitting pure logic into metaphysics, and base metaphysics on experience and reason which is the perception and organization of experience by intelligence.

We have then to assume that things happen in the General Being as they do in us. Trying to express itself, the General Being separates one Actual from its Inactual. Then, in that rejected Inactual, another Actual concentrates; and so on, as conceptions are produced in us. Each Actual thus formed in the General Being is an individual.

5. Pain and Pleasure are the twin concomitants of creation, which is expression, which is division.

When the Inactual concentrates itself, on one hand it increases the intensity of some of its desires, and that is the production of pleasure. But at the same time, a new Inactual is created, and, for the moment, anyhow, refused expression. Desire is torn into two parts: one is satisfied, and gives pleasure; the other is rejected and becomes pain: unsatisfied desire.

Thus in work, there is first a pleasure, the intensification of desire by expression; but there is an effort, which is a pain, which soon culminates in fatigue and actual suffering. Therefore, in human beings, at the

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same time as desire for work, there is laziness, a repulsion in front of work: a fear of the suffering in it.

Thus:

6. Pleasure is the self-consciousness of desire, the aim of every being: as has been explained under 3; and

7. Pain is the consciousness of loss which accompanies the rejection by desire of part of itself in the course of its expression.

8. There is in every being the instinct of concentration: of the necessity to choose and reject.

Since Being progresses on the lines of division and concentration, every individual has in himself that same need.

Intellectual consciousness is produced, as we have seen under 1, by concentration; by choosing one line of thought and rejecting all the others.

Moral conscience is the same process applied to action: man has realized since he began to be man that out of all the actions possible to him, he must choose some coherent course. He has deliberately forbidden himself to do a great number of things, which he has marked as evil; he has chosen some channels of action which he has called good. Thus he has developed out of animality, savagery, barbarism, into civilization. That instinct of concentration must be very deep-rooted in man, since, after all the orgies and ecstasies of lust, bloodshed and brutality of history, and in the middle of the welter of passions and ignominies of present mankind, moral conscience

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still exists, and, in the best individuals, is probably stronger than ever; and, ultimately, makes a bid for the political government of mankind. And there remains always, in the moral conscience, in intellectual processes, in chastity, in jealousy, the same deep sense that some things must not be done, that a being has to concentrate in one direction, whatever be the suffering to be borne.

9. Concentration in a Universe produces men; in a man, ideas.

The matter of the Universe, elaborated by a special process which concentrates infinite powers into very small particles, ultimately produces men.

Thus the desires of man ultimately produce ideas. Take the idea expressed by the word *patriotism*. Man has originally a feeling of comfort and security in the existence of a group of men who have interests in common with him, who help him and protect him. That is a pure feeling, or desire. Then, in the course of its expression, that feeling becomes subdivided into several others: a feeling for the family; one for friends; one for superiors in the social order; one for servants; one for the group as a whole. Each of these feelings develops on its own lines. In the feeling for the group as a whole, again several elements concentrate; until at last there emerges one very precise, complicated, "sub-divided" feeling, extremely self-conscious of its aims, which we call "patriotism." As it has become conscious of many complications

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which were not in the primitive feeling, we call it an "idea." But patriotism varies in each man: there is A's patriotism, B's, and so on. And even in each man it varies: it generally is quite dormant, and comes to the foreground of consciousness for quite a short time occasionally. So in each of us there are many patriotisms which are born and die; each being a feeling of some duration and intense self-consciousness. Such summits of waves of desire I shall call "ideas." An idea is an individual being, a desire which lives in us for a certain short period in a very intense state, much more intense than our ordinary life; just as a man lives in a universe. Just as we say "man," or "American" to cover, to name, a great number of beings, thus we give the name "patriotism" to a whole nation of "ideas," each individual and different and transitory. But for the purpose of these metaphysics, *an idea* shall mean such a being. Thus ideas come from desires, as men come from Universes.

10. The Inactual is common to all; individuals are concentrations of the One Inactual Being in different directions.

In the General Being one Actual being crystallises; all that is left out still belongs to the General Being, not to the Actual. Thus what a man has not expressed does not belong to him: there is even a precise feeling of being robbed, of suffering personal injury, when somebody else expresses something

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which we might have, but have not, expressed. And verily we left it in the Inactual and someone else did take it. The possibilities of our being extend, backwards, going up the course of concentration, to the whole General Being, where they naturally interpenetrate and are one with the possibilities of all other beings.

But also, naturally, there are several degrees of concentration of the Inactual, and in that sense, the Inactual from which we have derived our actuality is nearer to us than the General Being, is more particularly our Inactual. Much as men have a country which they belong to, more precisely than they belong to the whole of mankind. But that country is not theirs, as individuals, exclusively: each shares it with a number of others. It is thus with the different degrees of concentration of the Inactual, and with what we may call "our" Inactual.

Thus, there are three stages of being which we are clearly conscious of: the General Being subdivides and concentrates into *universes*; a universe subdivides and concentrates into *men*; a man subdivides and concentrates into *ideas*.

II. COSMOLOGY: LANGUAGES AND CONVENTIONS

11. Being expresses itself through languages.

Language has two important functions: an individual function and a social function.

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In the individual it actualises the desires, it gives them a tangible, precise, conscious form. Thus, there is in our brain a perpetual monologue going on; and all our thoughts appear to us precisely in words. Not that words, or expression, are the first immediate perception we have of our thoughts. Before words, we have the thoughts in a vague state, as intuitions, feelings; complex, sometimes instantaneous; but we immediately translate them into words and thus fix them. It is, however, possible for us to perceive frequently the first stage of wordless thought: but it is very elusive; we experience it best when it happens that our mind is busy at a time when some intuition or perception comes upon us; we defer for a moment putting it into words, because we are putting something else into words just then. And often it escapes us without having been actualised.

The social rôle of language, which is to make us communicate with our fellow-beings, is metaphysically much more complicated, and falls under epistemology. (See 12 to 16.)

12. Languages are established by Conventions, which are necessary collaborations of certain categories of beings to help each other in their expression.

No being could have time or strength enough to establish a complete system of language; and if he did, that language would not fulfil its second function, of social intercourse, since no one else would

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understand it. Madmen occasionally succeed partially in creating a language peculiar to themselves, and thus get out of harmony and communication with the rest of men; but it may perfectly satisfy them personally.

But normal beings copy their languages from each other, thus reserving the greater part of their energy for the expression of themselves in those languages.

But no language can be created which is common to the whole of Being, on account of the Inactual which remains, and goes on creating, outside any circle whatever. Therefore, collaborations are limited. Some great groups are formed of beings which, being drawn from the same Inactual, have similar aims, and can use a more or less common language. Also, no two beings can have absolutely the same language, since they have different desires to express. And the more complicated beings become, the more subdivided and subtle their desires, the smaller is the group of beings they can collaborate with, until the subtlest artists create, on the basis of the common languages, a personal means of expression which we have to learn in order to understand them. They do it by giving new and subtler meanings to words or signs already in use.

13. Matter is the language of desire on the plane of the Universes.

Matter is a language. Not metaphorically, as Carlyle might say it was a garment, but in reality.

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It is a means of expression which fulfils the two functions of language, the individual and the social.

Individually, we use matter to make our desires more intense, to satisfy them: thus we build houses, we grow food, we eat, etc., to fulfil certain needs of ours; even as we use words to express certain conceptions, which is also to satisfy certain needs.

Socially, we use matter to apprise other beings of our existence and desires: thus we put a wall round our properties to mark them as ours to other beings.

Animals and plants also use matter to the same ends: a plant organises matter into wood to give itself a solid place in the world, into chlorophyll to feed itself, etc.

We deduce from that that lower stages of matter are simply the expressions of less differentiated desires, which use matter on their plane as we use it on ours. We can experience that fact in our body: deep and powerful, but vague and semi-unconscious desires build up and organize the matter of our bodies, desires which our more conscious desires are built upon, and which preside over the digestive, circulatory, breathing and reproductive functions. We can often experience the change of both desire and matter simultaneously in our bodies, and see that the variations of the second satisfy the first.

Now the language of matter is subject to laws, even as speech is; but the language of matter is used by the whole physical universe, spreading as far as we can perceive. Its laws are the result of the collabora-

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tion, of the action in common, of the whole physical universe, and our part as men in that collaboration is small. We accept that language more than we create it.

Matter is the language of the Universes.

14. Action is the language of desire on the plane of men.

Men have more subtle and precise desires than the Universe. Therefore they use the language of matter as an artist uses the language of speech: they give to it new and subtler meanings.

For instance, a rock falls from a mountain and kills some animal; or a man kills the animal by crushing it under a rock. The same material expression has been used. But man has put a purpose into it which is much subtler and more precise than the vague purpose of gravitation behind the natural event. That difference of complexity, that further degree of subdivision in the desire, makes of men's actions a language different from that of the events of the Universe.

15. In speech and art are the beginnings of the language of desire on the plane of ideas. (Most speech is action.)

Ideas begin to exist in men. And they are infinitely more complex and subtle than men. They need, therefore, a means of expression correspondingly subtle and complex. That necessity caused the

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formation of speech, which is modified much more easily than matter, because the collaboration that forms it is much smaller and much more easily influenced. But man uses speech first as a means to clarify and express his purpose in action, to prepare and organise action. Speech is properly a language of transition: of the period during which desires subdivide into ideas. Therefore most speech is action. But in the arts, which have no purpose on the plane of action, and should aim only at expressing ideas, man is beginning to lay the foundations of a language of ideas, in which speech shall have a part also.

16. Beings, in their expression of themselves, modify the Inactual around them. As the Inactual is common to all, beings communicate with each other through their perception of the modifications of the Inactual.

When we act or express something, we actualise a part of the Inactual. The next being who wants to express a desire similar to ours will find a difference in the Inactual: it will be either easier, or more difficult, for him to express himself. Just as, if we put a wall across a path, people going along the path will perceive it; or people building another wall near ours or upon ours will be helped by it. Those differences in the resistance of the Inactual to a being's actions are the source of that being's perceptions of the outside world. He has a great part in common

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with the outside world, when the world modifies that part, the being necessarily feels it.

For the purposes of collaboration, beings modify the Inactual purposely, in order to affect their fellow-beings and convey definite impressions to them. Languages are thus wilfully organised modifications of the Inactual. Thus matter exists outside us as the sum of the modifications, which all beings using it have brought into the Inactual. This view of matter as a language synthesises the opposing views of idealism—since the language of matter is a creation of a collaboration; and realism—since at the same time it has an outside and independent reality. The vibration which is the basis of all language, matter as well as speech, is an elementary vibration of the Inactual which is considered under 32. From this follows the definition of the senses, since metaphysically,

17. The senses are the powers which translate perceptions of the modifications of the Inactual into languages,

that is, vibrations into matter, colour, sound, etc.

18. In the organisation of the world, the pain which emanates from all creative activity is being perpetually rejected: partially non-expressed. A quantity of suffering accumulates in the Inactual and tries to express itself through individuals. That is the Evil Element in the Universe. Evil is pain felt separately from its cause, creation.

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When we work we naturally and necessarily try to make the work as pleasant as possible: to get out of our creation only the pleasure, and avoid the pain. (See 5.)

That the pain we thus reject remains in the Inactual is perhaps best exemplified in the fact of envy. All the beings who witness a successful work in some degree envy it, and often endeavour to wreck it, and thus express the pain it causes them by venting their resentment upon its cause.

Thus around a prosperous nation envy and hatred accumulate, and ultimately give rise to wars. In envy, in anger, the evil element of pain which is in the Inactual becomes active, actualises itself as a need to make some being suffer.

But as every being acts in the same way, trying to avoid the pain which it should legitimately bear in its creations, there is loosed in the Universe a tremendous and ever-increasing quantity of suffering which desires to be expressed. That is Evil. And if that element can capture some being, express itself in him, and make him suffer, it appears to us that such a being suffers causelessly, which is our conception of evil.

19. The Conventions protect against Evil the beings that belong to them.

A Convention is a union of beings who have fundamentally similar desires, or desires which can help one another in their expression. All stand by one

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another, by acknowledging and supporting any action, any creation of any member of the Convention. All agree in rejecting pain out of their creation: comfort is essentially the mark of conventionality. And as their united strength is much greater than the evil loosed by any particular individual act of creation, Conventions succeed in protecting their members as individuals.

They may come to grief, however, as a group, when through their systematisation of laws, they stand in the way of the further development of the Inactual. Then Universes perish entirely.

But while they last, Conventions are efficient; they are specially efficient against such manifestations of evil as appear among their members: in a certain degree, they prevent such feelings as envy against the successful members from becoming effective.

20. Accidents are violations of Conventional laws. Such violations being outside the protection of the Convention entail suffering.

When a being acts in such a way that his desire goes, in expression, against the laws of the Convention, the Convention refuses to take the expression into account. That being is left to fight for himself against the pain which comes out of his creation. That he might accomplish; but the evil element, attracted by that pain, which is a beginning of actualisation for the Evil One, concentrates out of the Inactual upon the isolated being. And the being is de-

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livered to the Evil One, and suffers accordingly.

That is recorded in the old myth that all those who act against the Convention of men (which is morality: see 21) go to Hell. It is further acknowledged by the fact that men, quite against their better or reasonable instincts, make malefactors suffer, torture them, or kill them. Joseph de Maistre, in the "Soirées de Saint Petersburg," thus justifies the old system of punishment by torture. Social ostracism against defaulters is the civilised form of the same fact.

But the Universal Convention punishes most, and most severely, as it is the most powerful and the most precise. Thus a man who steps on a point of space where the laws of gravitation do not allow him to step in order to express his particular desire, falls, in accordance with the law he neglected, and suffers, is mutilated or dies, because the Evil One is let loose upon him: nothing in the Universe helps him in that attempt at an expression which the laws of the Universe do not allow.

21. Man belongs to two Conventions: the Universal Convention: which is the Material Convention; the Human Convention: which is the Moral Convention.

We have seen under 9 three degrees in the concentration of the Inactual: Universes, men, ideas. For each degree there is a language, for each degree there is a Convention. The Universal Convention is expressed in the laws of matter; matter being its lan-

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guage. The Human Convention is expressed in the laws of action, action being its language. The laws of action are morality.

This second Convention is much more fragile than the first, because far fewer beings have part in it; and also because it is comparatively recent. Indeed it is not yet quite accomplished, since there are several different religious systems of morality; and since in each system a great number of individuals do not follow the laws. The systems of morality establish themselves as religions, thus claiming, rightfully, metaphysical existence, and the power to damn those who do not follow their laws. But their power is very limited, as compared with that of the Universal Convention, because man is only a transitional phase between universes and ideas. Also they are incoherent and badly organised, because in the Moral Conventions, ideas already exist in some way, and cannot be ruled by such conventions. And the Moral Convention thus tends to ostracise ideas.

On the other side, the Material Convention, which is so much more precise and powerful, is getting to be a cramping force in the development of the In-actual. Many things which we desire, and desire legitimately, are forbidden us by the laws of matter; just as many ideas are unwarrantably forbidden us by the moral law.

22. Man's specific work is to prepare the third Convention: the Convention of ideas, which is the Metaphysical Convention.

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Creating is for man the same as discovering. In the Material Convention, in the Moral Convention, are the elements ready for the Metaphysical Convention. Each successive stage is only a development of the previous one, which is too narrow. By the study of the two Conventions, man will derive from them, at once creating and discovering it, the rule of the organisation of ideas.

He creates the rule, because in him, in his consciousness, it is evolved. The Inactual creates it in him, but man is the highest point of the Inactual (up to himself): thus man is the creator; he brings to light in himself something which was only in the Inactual before, and in that way he discovers the rule of the World of Ideas.

Nevertheless, that rule is far beyond him; he can only prepare its coming; by sub-dividing and resolving his desires into ideas, and using what intelligence, what self-consciousness he has, in organising what he sees of the ideas. Man has always acknowledged his powerlessness to create Conventions for himself. He has acknowledged a God as the founder of the material Convention, as the Creator of the World. He has acknowledged another God, a Messiah, as the founder of the Moral Convention. A further concentration of the Inactual, a further manifestation of even such another God, will be necessary for the foundation of the Metaphysical Convention. But such Gods are, and work in, Man and being generally.

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III. PSYCHOLOGY: FALL AND RESURRECTION

23. Existence entails responsibility.

A being exists when the outside world takes his actions into account. Even if he could ignore his fellow-beings, he must be taken into account by the Inactual that created him, since otherwise another being would be created in his place. But an action is only an expression, which the world can take into account only on the understanding that there is a force behind it, so that when the world builds its own expressions on that, that should be kept up by the necessary energy. Actions are like cheques or notes of hand: they circulate as credit for a while, but ultimately they must be cashed, or there must be the possibility of their being cashed.

Thus the world, in its actions, is obliged, under pain of collapse, to demand of each being that he should stand by his actions. The world can only take into account a being that has the necessary force to bear the consequences of his deeds; and sooner or later the consequences of an act according to the laws of the World-Conventions are thrown back by the world upon the author of the act. For instance, a man can walk across a street only if he can bear the responsibility of doing it: satisfy the laws of gravitation; he sets to work with the strength necessary to move his body across, make a passage for himself through intermediary obstacles, be they the air or the

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traffic, etc. In this case he has to pay his cheque generally at once. But, for instance, he may only eat some particular food if he is sure of digesting it, and not being killed by it: and there he may not have to pay the cheque for long periods, and yet in the end be poisoned or endangered. But in any case the world cannot and does not take notice of any action which has not a sufficient responsibility behind it; if such an expression is attempted, the being who causes it is crushed, just as a man is under the traffic he has been unable to resist or avoid in crossing the street.

24. Responsibility entails immortality.

The consequences of any action extend *ad infinitum*, because any action once performed has to be taken into account, more or less, by all the beings that are in the world, and by all the future beings the Inactual will bring into the world. No being can therefore ever completely and for ever disappear, for in the scheme of the world there should be a gap, and all beings taking, as they must, into account, the consequences of actions of a non-existent individual, would be giving out cheques on a fictive account and therefore collapse. Indeed, that partly does happen, and thus all beings do die one after another, and cannot very long survive anyone they have known. And yet the world goes on and does not die, and that demands the continued existence in some form of all the beings that have been in it. Otherwise the world

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itself would come to an end and being cease altogether: indeed, it would have ceased æons ago.

25. Liberty is the power of expressing one's desires; it is a concomitant of responsibility; and both, of existence itself.

A being who could not express his desires would not know them, and therefore would not have them: since the essence of desire is the possibility of self-consciousness; and the only way desire reaches self-consciousness, or intensity, or satisfaction, is by expression. Liberty is therefore what a being gains by coming into the world; as responsibility is the price he must pay for it. And since a being once come into the Actual, creates ever more and more Inactual (See 2), and grows infinitely,

26. As every being is infinite, liberty entails immortality.

27. The foundation in men of the World of Ideas is the beginning of an immortality which is continued in a different order of Being.

There are in men innumerable desires which are not of this world: which arise from no events that have taken place in it; which serve no ends connected with it. Such are, particularly, all desires of man for the beautiful. But every desire has to be realised. In spite of all the modal variations of its existence (see 28 to 30), it persists and increases for ever (see 2). If therefore we find in ourselves desires, such as

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our need of beauty, which are not to be satisfied in this world, we can only deduce (from our psychological experience that all desire is ultimately satisfied) that such desires must needs continue to seek for an expression after this world. And since the conditions of this world are impediments to them, these desires will create for their expression a different cosmic organisation.

In reality, none of our Ideas (see 9) find satisfaction at all in this world; that is why they cannot live in it and disappear so rapidly from our consciousness. They can only be said to have been born into us, so fitfully do they live; and yet we feel their infinitude and their force while they possess us; and that they need and strive for full life and expression. They come into our consciousness as the summits of the waves of our desires; but they are new departures, and new foundations; and the absolute earnestness of the life to come; as well as the proof that whatever life to come there is shall have no common measure with this present one, and be in no way like it; so much so, as not to be perceivable even from this life.

28. When a desire has reached the highest intensity it is capable of it ceases and falls. Perfection is annihilation.

Thus all desire, in its satisfaction, ceases: be it hunger in eating, or love in union: the utmost reach of desire is the summit of a curve, and precedes its extinction; but

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29. A fall is a return into the Inactual, ever unsatisfied, which refills the fallen being with new forces, and resurrects it. Desire follows an infinite rhythm of rise, fall and resurrection.

Thus our desire of eating soon returns to us; thus, although, after contemplating some work of art, we go away satisfied, there soon comes upon us the craving to see a work of art again. And the craving to see another, a more beautiful, work of art, because the first satisfaction of our desire has created a new Inactual in us: has revealed to us many beauties we had not imagined, which we now desire, in a second work of art, to see developed and brought out. Thus, after eating one particular meal, we find in us a desire for a better prepared and organised meal when our hunger comes again. The satisfaction of a desire thus allays it only for the moment; in fact, it increases the desire, because it makes it aware of new subtleties it was not conscious of before, and which it will demand and augment in its next expression. Thus not only is desire a series of waves, but an ascending series of waves, in which the summit of each rises higher than the summit of the preceding one.

30. There are two kinds of fall: sleep and death. In sleep, a desire comes back as desire, in the same expression; in death, a desire gives up its former expression, and comes back on the next plane, subdivided into ideas.

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Take sexual desire, which each expression or satisfaction calms but for a while, but which at the end of our life ceases altogether. It sleeps between each expression, and comes back in the same expression again. In the end, it dies completely. But this only means it gives up one mode of existence and one language. In those of us whose minds are not dead before their sexual desire is, that desire subsists, no longer caring for physical satisfaction, but transformed into many ideas: many needs of beauty, of intensity, of expansion, of high action. Old men, who have perfected the sexual desire and transformed it into innumerable ideas in the experience of their life, are—when, it must be repeated, they are not mentally dead before—much keener and much greater, much larger mentally than young men. There is in their life a great luminous calm and self-possession which makes them in all ages the great leaders of men. They already exist in the world of ideas. Their sexual desire has been subdivided into ideas; come back to them in new modes of being and of expression.

That state has been ever the aim of the ascetics, who have tried to get rid of sexual desire. But the only means to get rid of a desire is to satisfy it. However, some men have succeeded, even with sexual desire; and all men succeed, in the course of their life, in transforming many desires into ideas.

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31. Ideas need a new language; as matter is too ponderous an expression for them. The formation of the world of ideas entails the death of the material universe.

It has been shown under 21 and 27 that ideas cannot subsist in this world of the material language. Ideas are too rapid, too flitting, too intense to be able to express themselves adequately among the expressions of the gross desires of men. But we see and experience the end of the desires of man; whereas we are only conscious of the birth of the ideas—their mere sprouting into our consciousness. As no man can keep an idea more than a few seconds in his brain, and even then is exhausted; he keeps only the remembrance of that idea, expressed in terms of language; what we call “an abstract idea,” the mere generic name of it. He no longer feels and experiences it as a living fire and a living individual within himself.

The rhythm of the ideas is infinitely more rapid than that of the desires. Desires take a lumbersome and slow-moving material machinery to realise themselves: see the infinite trouble and servitude of the search for and preparation of food. Ideas leap in and out of our brains in periods which are often hardly perceptible lengths of time. And as ideas come out of desires (see 9), they have to wait for each other, during long periods of sleep, while the parent desire of the next idea slowly evolves

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it. Therefore a proper organisation of the world of ideas can only take place when all the desires of this world shall have been resolved into ideas, and shall have died; thus doing away with the very necessity of the material language which so obstructs the expression of the ideas. Occasionally in our dreams some of our ideas take advantage of the plasticity and mobility of the dream forms to express themselves; and such dreams leave us the remembrance of emotions more subtle and intimate than any in the physical life.

32. The basis of all language is the elementary vibration of desire, the first rise and fall of the Inactual. Thus all language, all expression, is rhythm.

What language, then, can the ideas create for themselves, once they have abolished matter as used by this world?

We can conceive the basis of all matter and of all desire as the first elementary attempt at an expression of the first elementary Inactual our world has come out of. And that attempt would be, as for all desire, a rise and fall; and that rise and fall, infinitely repeated, through the whole world, would be vibration: the First Being would feel itself as a vibration, and all further beings, since they are parts of it, would feel it as a vibration, and would feel it as the first stuff they themselves are made of. Upon that, different beings would raise different complications of vibrations, different rhythms and the Ma-

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terial Convention is one system of such rhythms, built upon the elementary vibration.

And any desire being drawn from that first Inactual can only express itself by modifications of the first vibration; therefore all expression is rhythm. Therefore the ideas, organising a world of ideas, can create a new language out of the elementary vibration; they will have the same basis for it as universal desires have had for matter. Such a language is partly being evolved out of the material language, in two ways: consciously, in the arts, which use material forms and copies of material things to express ideas, by having their will of such forms; and unconsciously, in our dreams, when we use similar forms and copies detached from their substratum of matter, to express many impossible things, and at times even ideas.

IV. ESCHATOLOGY: DESTINY

33. Universes also reach perfection and die; in the World of Ideas and the realisation of the Metaphysical Convention.

The death and disappearance of the Material World is but the prelude to the resurrection of the World of Ideas born from that physical cosmos, since in the material world the Ideas have not reached perfection. The Ideas will, therefore, using the experience of the Material World, create an organisation and a language which will be fully realised in a

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Metaphysical Convention. In this Metaphysical Convention the Universe—that portion of the Inactual which formed first the physical, and after it the ideal, Cosmos—will itself reach perfection and therefore fall into annihilation also, as is the way of all the Actual.

34. Nothing is ever lost for the Inactual: and the Inactual never ceases from creating.

The Inactual retains all the experience Being acquires in its actualisations. This is seen in all the generations of Being on the earth, since to the rapid creation of a man the Inactual brings the results of the experience of countless centuries. Indeed no life would exist, did not the Inactual store and reproduce all past experiences. Also the Inactual, which is ever increased by all actualisations (see 2) incessantly casts new beings into the Actual. The very essence of desire is the tendency for expression—towards self-consciousness, and it is inconceivable that its activity should stop.

35. A fallen world is reproduced in new circumstances: that is among new worlds which the Inactual has created during the period of the fall of that world.

Once the world (see 33) comes to its extinction, the Inactual, in its further creations, takes into complete account the experience it has gained through that world. Therefore, all the worlds created after that

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are in a degree based upon the dead Universe. As they develop (see 23 and 24) they will need more and more the existence of that Universe, until ultimately their need will bring the Inactual to re-create it. With this external cause of re-creation works the internal cause as seen under 29; the Inactual of the dead world, increased during its actual existence, will also re-create it. But then this world will come back under different conditions: it will be responsible for all the consequences of its former existence on the posterior worlds; and in turn it will have to adapt its new course to the new existences that have actualised during its sleep. Thus it will remain in essence the same: its original Inactual remains as its basis; and therefore all beings that have crystallised in it will be born anew in it, since it is their Inactual that has internally demanded and caused re-creation; but the courses of each being will have to be different, since the external circumstances will be different.

Thus the resurrected world will have a new series of activities to go through to express more profoundly what is in its own Inactual, and to help, in common with the new worlds, to express the larger Inactual which is behind them all. And we conceive this process as being infinitely repeated, in ever enlarging units: the group of worlds behaving in the next avatar as that one world did by itself; and so on.

36. Every being reappears in and with its world, again and again, in new circumstances.

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Thus re-incarnation of separate beings takes place in the successive Universes. As Samuel Butler saw, all the previous experiences in past incarnations go to make more and more rapid and complex the process of physical evolution, so that beings store in their bodies all the memories of their infinite past.

37. There exists for each being a permanent Abstraction, which is its true imperishable essence: a plan of that being which life makes real again and again in varying circumstances.

What then remains of each being from incarnation to incarnation? A plan which is a germ. Thus in the seed of the tree there is the plan of the future tree. But any one tree never completely fulfils that plan, because the plan is susceptible of development. That plan should be represented as a group of lines, of directions of desire, which at the foot of a tree are close pressed together: and as you follow each fibre, it diverges, subdivides and expands, and all fibres do so. And yet if at any height of the tree a horizontal plane be driven across the whole, there you have the plan of the tree; and if the plane be cut across at several different heights, the several plans of the tree thus obtained will be developments, the higher of the lower ones. Such a type-plan of a being I call its abstraction: it is the only permanent thing we can abstract from the being. And it is such a plan as, remaining essentially the same, yet

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is developed from stage to stage; the living realisation of it being thus ever different and yet similar and even identical.

38. There exists a plan of all the Abstractions, which is Destiny, but the Inactual is for ever coming into the Plan with new creations.

If we consider one world as one being, the process described under 37 is also realised in it; and also in a group of worlds. Thus we get to a dynamic conception of Destiny, as a sort of scheme in three dimensions, as a plan of directions going from the past into the future. As being develops, the lines of directions diverge one from the other, and branch out into subdivisions.

Besides this development of existing beings, the Inactual perpetually brings into existence new beings, which may be conceived as getting room for their existence in the widening gaps of Inactual between the diverging lines; and also new beings come into the Actual during the sleep periods of the already actualised beings (see 34 and 35).

Thus, from knowing the sum total of the Abstractions at one possible moment, it would be possible to deduce the general course of events in the future, to see the direction of the development of any particular being; but it would remain impossible to foresee whether, at any particular time, any particular event would happen, because of the new creations of the

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Inactual which will take place between the widening lines of the plan, and to which all beings will have to adapt themselves.

39. In Destiny, the will, or desire, of each being is completely accomplished.

This is the necessary consequence of the principles from (see 23 to 26). All desires that exist are accomplished. Sometimes they fall, in sleep or in death, in their normal course of expression; sometimes they reach their perfection and disappear in a fighting stage.

A desire which finds itself in unfavourable circumstances (that is, among inimical beings) will express itself fully in the attempt to realise itself in spite of them: against them. It will find in the struggle the same intensification of pleasure which it normally would look for in ordinary expression—and often higher pleasure. Therefore, though apparently baffled to the sight of the outside world, in itself it will be satisfied, and disappear, either in sleep or in subdivided death, in its perfection.

The perception of this fact is complicated by the grouping of desires in men. A man whose desire seems denied him, really has generally lost that desire, perfected as it was in struggle; but the other desires in the man mechanically go on keeping up the former activity, useless now, and apparently a failure. A man is a failure, not because his desire has not been satisfied, but because he has lost it. But

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other inferior desires in him, his laziness, his love of comfort, his fear of original effort, are trying to exploit at the expense of the world the situation created by the existence and then the loss of the first desire: those other desires are ineffectually trying to live on as though the first had not disappeared. And even so, they are only fulfilling the law that all desire accomplishes its aim and realises itself in destiny.

40. Destiny is the will of the Total Being, which is one: the one striving towards Self-Consciousness, and for ever, as its self-consciousness has its infinitude for object, and the Inactual grows with the growth of the Actual.

The one Inactual at the basis of all beings makes them all members of one Being.

We can then conceive Destiny as the Abstraction of that One Total Being: a tableau of all the wills of all the beings with the necessary willed consequences and reactions of their attempt at self-knowledge by expression. Destiny is the realisation of Will; and there is no antinomy between destiny and liberty.

And destiny grows, even as being grows, out of the Inactual. And no end is possible, because, as seen under 2, the Inactual is increased by every actualisation.

The effort towards self-consciousness of the ultimate first Inactual produces individual beings; it groups those individual beings, as they reach perfec-

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tion individually, into worlds which then behave as individuals, and reach perfection, and are then caught up as parts of a group of worlds, which in turn becomes one individual, and so on for ever.

But in that ever widening complication of falls and resurrections, each being remains, with ever larger and different duties; and this destiny, which is the realisation of its will, has its laws in

V. ETHICS

The duty of man is to be at once the discoverer and the creator of Being, by reaching full self-consciousness:

41. To understand the will of the total being, and to understand that his own will is identical with it.

42. To feel, in pleasure, the development of the Total Being, and to bear, in pain, his own share of the suffering of creation.

43. To act: to express in his languages the Total Being; that is, on man's plane, to resolve the desire given him into ideas.

To carry out the Moral Conventions;

And to lay the foundations of the Metaphysical Convention.

COMPLEMENTARY DIALOGUES

VICES

The search after pleasure is legitimate. The error in vice lies in the fact that the immediate pleasure kills pleasure too quickly. Morality is the art of making pleasure last.

Some quantity of vice must be cultivated; without it our reason for living might disappear, and our will to live forsake us.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Avarice comes from a need of precision, order, conservation, which is connected with formal intellect. Misers belong to the intelligent type.

THE POET: Balzac in his *Interdiction*, points out, as a picturesque trait, the resemblance in face and manner between the intelligent and kind-hearted judge Popinot, and a miser. Balzac gives no reason, but records an observed fact.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Avarice develops the intellect: the need not to allow anything to be lost or to escape is the basis of the scientific spirit.

THE DREAMER: This need, transmitted by heredity as an acquired instrument, to descendants who are not avaricious, can be applied by them to science, politics or business.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Avarice is the dominant trait
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in the French character; hence the development of intellect in the French.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: This is a case of a prior cosmic desire first acquiring its technique and consciousness in inferior expressions, and then rising to higher ones.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Pride is another instance. It cannot be explained through the qualities of the proud man, who often has no qualities. It is the affirmation of the joy and force of Being in one man who becomes the channel of that expression.

THE DREAMER: Fear is another of the cosmic forces; either individual or panic fear is generally out of proportion to its causes. A kind of disintegration of the general Being manifests itself in individual beings. Universal fear precipitates into personal units.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: It is thus with suffering, at a death, for instance; and it is thus with all feelings which have no common measure with individual experience. The Total Being reaches consciousness of its feelings in individuals. Again it is thus with faith, which has no adequate cause.

THE POET: Vices are thus the last—or sometimes the first—expressions in languages not made for them, of desires which will be legitimate in a superior plane, or have been legitimate in a lower one.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Thus selfishness has been a virtue in the inferior orders of being; the need of concentration which produced individuals.

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Hence love has two forms: a material and a spiritual one: and lust is connected with love.

Hence gluttony is connected with taste; and the word "taste" applies both to physical and to spiritual experiences.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Vice is the expression in the language of one Convention of desires not belonging to that Convention.

Thus pride, envy, anger, sloth are legitimate desires in the *Material Convention*, being necessary to the passing of Universes into human desires. They are vestiges of a former order of existence, out of place in the *Moral Convention*.

Lust, gluttony, avarice, which foreshadow love, taste, intellect, are the first expressions of the *Metaphysical Convention*, out of place in the *Moral Convention*.

THE DREAMER: All the vices can be followed up in the three Conventions.

THE POET: Plato explained this in the difference between the demotic Venus, who is vice, and the heavenly Venus, who is virtue; and marked the passage from the lower to the higher, the transformation of desire into ideas, which makes vice into virtue.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Hence the rôle of vice: it settles the arrears of preliminary Conventions; it prepares the Conventions of the future.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Vice is the expression in one Convention of a desire that does not belong to it. But accident is the breaking of the laws of a Con-

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vention. Therefore, normally, sooner or later, vice brings accident: thus lust, gluttony, anger, sloth.

THE DREAMER: In the Moral Convention, the *wages of sin is death*.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: It happens, however, that vice breaks no laws: then it goes unpunished.

THE DREAMER: But then it must have developed into intelligence, which frees it from its punishment by bringing it into the Metaphysical Convention.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: It happens also that a vice allies itself with a normal virtue and then it is not reckoned as against the Convention. Thus lust allied to love goes often totally—and oftener partially—unpunished.

THE POET: Thus perhaps perfect selfishness might protect us from the Evil One.

THE DREAMER: It would then be punished in the Metaphysical Convention.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The Moral Convention is insufficient, and is only a transition stage. Hence the ambiguous position of vice.

THE PRESENCE OF THE IDEAS

THE DREAMER: Life consists mainly of waiting. The success and influence of art comes long after its production. That applies also to the most commonplace enterprises. The greatest part of our time is spent in waiting for the results of actions performed.

Hence the length of death for men: we have to

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wait for the world to reach the point we had reached when we died.

Hence the longer duration of death for the ideas, which are infinitely more in advance of the world than we.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: This shows that the centre of gravitation of the Universe is in larger and slower masses than men. The Inactual must be given time to concentrate after the appeal made to it.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: It is therefore an error to hurry the course of things; hence abortions.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The more subdivided a being, the quicker it reaches the consciousness of its individuality. Thus men have reached consciousness before the Universes; and they must sink into sleep and death to wait for the Universes to catch up.

THE POET: Therefore the Ideas have attained conscious individuality before men.

THE DREAMER: The Ideas have existed on the Earth before men, just as men now exist when Universes do not. The Ideas have existed in the animals and in early man; hence the unsurpassed delicacy of prehistoric art.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Tables of individualisation:—

- I. Universes: non-individualised.
- II. Men: non-individualised: plants: animals.
- III. Ideas: non-individualised: animal art: beaver, bee, etc.

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- III. Ideas: individualised: prehistoric art: passing of animality into mankind.
- II. Men: individualised: present stage.
- I. Universes: individualised: to come.

THE DREAMER: The Ideas have been the first individuals: they inserted themselves into animal organisms and even before that into plants and matter: hence the beauty and the marvels of plants: hence insect and animal instincts—as complicated as the finest ideas ever born into men's brains. Ideas have been neither the creation nor the monopoly of men.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: But it was the coming of the Ideas to individual consciousness which lifted man out of the animal stage. There was a period when the brain of man was not adequate to the understanding of the works of art he created, even as insects are used by their instincts.

THE DREAMER: Hence prehistoric art, Egyptian art, and others, which their creators did not understand, giving to them meanings that were not in them, associating them with the stupidities of their puerile brains.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Hence the complicated legislation of primitive peoples, which does not come entirely from their brains.

THE POET: Which was taught them by gods: by the Ideas.

THE DREAMER: Hence the awe-inspiring spiritual chaos of the origins. As subtle Ideas as ever were

COMPLEMENTARY DIALOGUES

born were expressed by entirely inadequate intellects. Hence the marvellous philosophy of early religion: hence the inexhaustible meanings of mythology, poems which reach to the deepest essence of Being, mixed hopelessly with the unreason, the superstition, the logic or the illogicality of the grossest minds. Hence also the triumphs of primitive Ideas, which, occasionally, explosively, express themselves better, and shine more against their background than our Ideas, to the understanding of which our brains are more adequate, and with which our reason mixes better—to the detriment of the Ideas. Hence the great intuitions of the Sacred Books.

THE POET: We see the Ideas more clearly in those periods when they were alone.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Hence a theory of progress: the Ideas were there from the beginning and have not progressed: but man has progressed.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Just as the presence of the Ideas created conscious man, thus the presence of men will create—is creating—the conscious Universe.

THE DREAMER: Man before coming to the expression of his own consciousness, has first been an instrument of expression to the previous Ideas; to the Ideas that had expressed themselves—more or less unconsciously—in plants and animals. Man first gave consciousness to the previous ideas of the plant and animal worlds, because he came from those worlds and was overpoweringly surrounded by them.

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THE PSYCHOLOGIST: And his own body was as a summary of them.

THE DREAMER: Hence the early beliefs:—

Totemism: man is such-and-such a plant or animal; natural pantheism: man is the whole of nature and experiences the reincarnation and metamorphoses of the insect world, and the evolution of the natural species; the unsexed generation of primitive organisms; the falls and cataclysms of biology and geology; the hermaphroditism which comes before the sexes.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: But primitive mind, reaching such consciousness, attributed it to man, applied to itself the pre-human processes: hence the myths.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Man is first the organ of consciousness of the collectivity of Nature; then of Cosmic collectivity. Primitive Ideas were the coming into consciousness of the ideas that had presided over the natural phenomena. Philosophical Ideas will be the coming into consciousness of the abstractions which preside over the organizations of the metaphysical world.

THE DREAMER: The mind of man creates no Ideas: it is the organ through which the Universe reaches such consciousness of itself as is at present possible—

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: —but the mind of man warps and distorts such consciousness—

THE POET: —and this creates infinite new possibilities.

COMPLEMENTARY DIALOGUES

INDETERMINATION

“As if they would confine the Interminable
And tie him to his own prescript
Who made his laws to bind us, not himself . . .”

MILTON.

i. e. law binds the Actual, not the Inactual.

The problem of immortality does not exist where intellect is not developed: with the animal, the savage, the child. It is an artificial problem, and, as such, has this characteristic, that it has no solution.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Nothing in experience is simple. A logical mind could never, for instance, have imagined the complication of influences and mechanisms of our reproductive or digestive processes.

THE POET: Even our solar system, of which the general scheme seems so simple, puts on an incomprehensible complication when studied closely.

THE DREAMER: How then could death be simple, since no phenomenon of life is? How could death be either pure and simple cessation, or the survival of a soul much simpler than the living being?

THE POET: The two hypotheses are absurd, because they are simple, anti-natural. Immortality must be something very complicated.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Which, consequently, we have hardly any chance at all of imagining as it is.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Any pre-existing plan

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(either the abstraction of the general Being, or our own individual wills) is in n dimensions. The adaptation of the plan to reality is in $n + x$ dimensions. So that the adaptation follows the plan completely and yet brings about entirely new things. Thus nothing ever happens as expected.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Could a man be entirely convinced, to the bottom of his deepest self, of his immortality, he would cease to exist: he would fall into the absolute and have no reason left for living.

THE POET: The nature of being is then to desire conscious immortality and not to be able to reach it; so that it can neither cease nor yet exist for ever.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Which drives us to the theories of intermittent life, of returns.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Intellect necessarily destroys the idea of immortality; feeling perpetually reproduces it.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Which proves the idea of immortality to be indestructible. Therefore it will be brought into reality. It is impossible to admit that being has no aim; that being does not reach its aim: consciousness of itself; and consciousness once reached, the preservation of consciousness, which is immortality.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Life is the unforeseen: since the unforeseen alone brings pleasure, and pleasure is life. Life is the passing of the Inactual into the Actual: the coming to pass of the unforeseen.

Consequently, death can be foreseen, but life can-

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not; nor can the life after death be foreseen: Immortality is not proportioned to our intellect, because life is not.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Therefore the testimony of the intellect is not acceptable against immortality. But it is necessary that intellect should show us that there are possible actuals for that inactual.

THE POET: Hence the rôle of religion and poetry. Immortality will not be as we are taught; that it can be conceived is all the help that intellect brings us. But that help is indispensable.

THE DREAMER: Intellect remains the only judge even of what it cannot reach. It judges by default; and it judges without appeal, although it cannot report without appeal.

THE POET: Intellect is the judge, but not the witness.

THE DREAMER: Faith is the self-consciousness of will. It remains the basis, and the proof, that the aim will be reached. All will is done. But Faith cannot tell how.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: The manner of the existence of God, or the manner of our immortality is not yet settled for us (for the existence of God postulates two terms: *God* to exist, and *us* to know it). Therefore we cannot know about God nor about immortality.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Indetermination of metaphysical truth: It is equally true:

that we are mortal; that we are immortal—

that God exists; that God does not exist—

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The historical or experimental proof is not attainable in either hypothesis; neither hypothesis tallies with observed facts.

THE DREAMER: Therefore, if the matter is not as yet settled, there comes at the death of the individual a period of waiting and of annihilation. Immortality can only be in resurrection.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: We are creating our immortality and our God, even as we formerly created consciousness and man (Immortality being only an extension of consciousness, and God of man).

THE POET: The Metaphysical Convention is still to be created.

THE DREAMER: By the will of man.

THE END

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